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Marxism Today

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DISCUSSION:

JOHN PRIME

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

THE CHALLENGE OF MARXISM

THE TORY ATTACK ON THE SOCIAL
SERVICES

"ESSAYS IN SEEING"

SARTRE AND MARXISM

OUR MORALS AND LADY C

LONG-RANGE PLANNING TO RAISE
LIVING STANDARDS

ON PAPERBACKS

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Editorial Comments

THE British aircraft industry is a striking example of that close co-operation between the state and private enterprise (or non-enterprise) which is such an endearing feature of state monopoly capitalism. So some of the facts and arguments presented in a booklet on *The Making of Aircraft* by Guy Hadley (Conservative Political Centre, price 1s.) are of no little interest.

The privately-owned aircraft industry is by far the most heavily subsidised in Britain. In the financial year 1960-61 it is receiving a research subsidy of £157 million. In addition the Ministry of Aviation is spending £37 million in research in its own establishments, the results of which are available to privately-owned industry.

Yet Mr. Hadley has the sauce to declare that "it must be realised that these payments are not grants or subsidies which keep the industry alive by artificial feeding". But that is precisely what they are, and the author proceeds to demonstrate it in the pages which follow, when he admits that "the crux of the problem is that the resources of the aircraft industry, alone and unaided, are quite incapable of maintaining our position".

The £157 million for research is not the only subsidy. The Government has also promised "to provide increased support where appropriate for promising civil aircraft projects and aero-engines"; further it is stated that it will "contribute to the development, tooling and other initial costs of launching a new type [of aircraft]"; and, moreover, that it "might be prepared to contribute to the cost of proving a new type of civil aircraft and of introducing it into regular airline service". In short, a policy of subsidies galore.

It should be pointed out that, apart from the railways, none of Britain's nationalised industries (which are, of course, of a state-capitalist type) is subsidised. So some people are asking why, if the aircraft industry is to be subsidised, it should not also be nationalised. Mr. Hadley rebuffs this suggestion with the remark: "In such a bitterly-contested world market, success must depend on wise decisions, boldly taken, on a capacity for the calculated risk, on the encouragement of leadership in design and management by adequate incentives and on keenly competitive prices. These qualities have not been conspicuous in the record of industries already nationalised, which mostly operate as monopolies in a sheltered home market."

What, however, is the record of the privately-owned aircraft industry up to date? "It must first

be recognised that Britain has so far lagged behind in the field of long-range jet airliners." It appears that we have been pipped in this field by U.S. Boeing 707, Douglas D.C.7 and the French Caravelle. It is a pity that Mr. Hadley omits to tell us that the latter is the product of the nationalised aircraft industry of France.

"Perhaps the greatest single factor which has worked against us in the past has been delays which in some cases prevented the appearance of the right British aircraft at the right moment." So all in all the private British aircraft industry does not seem to have all the attributes which are claimed for it.

Then there is the question of the supersonic aircraft, whose prototype alone will cost £100 million. The British aircraft industry does not want to move too quickly, so Mr. Hadley tells us that "a breathing space is essential before the supersonic age arrives. This view is widely shared in the western world, but the attitude of the Soviet Union is still an unknown factor and the sudden appearance of a Russian supersonic liner is always on the cards". It looks as if socialist nationalisation at any rate knows its job.

Capitalist political economy used to tell us that any profits above the prevailing rate of interest, were "a reward for risk". But here is an industry, protected right, left and centre by the tender care of the monopoly-capitalist state. Its research is lavishly subsidised and it has sole access to a large home market created by the Government. The shareholder in any of the mergers recently promoted by the Government simply cannot lose. But he is still brazenly claiming his "reward for risk" in the shape of high dividends and is ready at any moment to prove that nationalisation is a failure because the railways have to be subsidised.

Profits of De-Nationalisation

There have been quite a few studies of the fortunes (or misfortunes) of nationalised industries, so the time is probably now right to trace the fortunes of a de-nationalised one—the iron and steel industry.

The March number of the *London and Cambridge Economic Bulletin* contains a financial study by Messrs. L. P. Foldes and S. S. Wilson, of fifty-five iron and steel companies before, during and since de-nationalisation, which throws light not only on the fortunes of these companies in the aggregate, but also on some aspects of monopoly capitalism.

To this some other material in the bulletin forms a useful supplement.

Between 1953 (when the industry was de-nationalised) and 1959 the production of steel ingots and castings increased by 13 per cent. (The iron and steel industry, of course, produces other products but this is a fair index of its general productive growth.)

In the same period the gross profits of the fifty-five companies increased by 76 per cent, which is not so bad considering the rise in production was only about 13 per cent.

The dividends paid out to shareholders increased much more rapidly than profits. They grew from £6,600,000 in 1953 to £22,600,000 in 1959—a 254 per cent increase. Of course, the cost of living increased in the same period by 20 per cent—but even allowing for this the shareholders did not do so badly.

In the article by Messrs. Foldes and Wilson there is a table giving an index of dividends of the de-nationalised steel companies and for all the non-nationalised companies in Britain. This shows a 241 per cent increase in the index of steel dividends for the period 1953-9 and a 68 per cent increase for the non-nationalised companies in general.

Of course, in this period the assets of the fifty-five companies increased enormously. From 1953-9, £948 million of new funds were put into the industry. Maybe the high dividends were necessary to attract private investors (insurance companies, etc. as well as individuals) to put money there.

In fact no less than £653 million were ploughed back by the industry itself. £121 million came from the state body charged with de-nationalisation—the Iron and Steel Holding and Realisation Agency—£46 million came from the Finance Corporation for Industry and only £130 million were subscribed by investors for share and loan capital issues.

In fact if the payments of dividends had been held down to the level that they were in the period before and during nationalisation there would have been no need to attract capital from private investors at all.

The only thing that de-nationalisation has done, therefore, is to enable a number of parasitic shareholders to fasten themselves on to the industry. They played no part in any of the developments in production and technique which have taken place. In fact the figures expose the claim that the private shareholder, by placing resources at the disposal of industry, enables development to take place and is therefore worthy of his reward.

Most development in large-scale capitalist industry nowadays is self-financed out of the surplus value extracted from the workers. In any case the shareholders' investments are only possible because they have received some of this surplus value, in

the form of dividends, and are putting a portion of it back in the hope of still further dividends.

World Without War

A second, revised edition of Professor Bernal's *World Without War* (first published in 1958) has now been published by Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. In his preface to this edition the author explains why a new edition has become necessary, in spite of the fact that the book's general thesis—the need to move to a world of peace, capable of making full use of the natural and human resources of the earth—has not in any way altered.

The chapter on nuclear warfare has had to be rewritten, because "the long-range missile age has definitely arrived", and this makes nonsense of most earlier strategy—it almost abolishes strategy. Developments have also made it necessary to rewrite parts of the scientific chapters dealing with the space age.

Changes have also been made in the economic chapters, because the production and marketing problems of the capitalist countries are now more acute, while the growing production from socialist countries is entering world markets.

The quickening pace of colonial liberation has brought up even more urgently the question of how to raise the production and cultural level of under-developed countries, and has required changes in the book, which deals extensively with this question.

And the growing consciousness of the need for peace and the breaking through of the surface of the cold war by the people's actions has required a new treatment of the political problems involved.

Professor Bernal is to be congratulated on this new effort to place the central political issues of today clearly before the peoples. Far from making *World Without War* less topical, the whole course of events throughout the world has made its thesis *more* real and urgent, and in its second edition it is an even more effective weapon in the struggle for peace and the advance of mankind.

Musical Events

It is a very long time since a British composer set any of Shakespeare's plays as an opera. In March we had the production of Britten's *Midsummer Night's Dream* at Covent Garden. Whatever one's opinion might be of the opera or the production, the artistic courage of the composer is without question. Soviet composers often express surprise that whereas Pushkin has inspired Russian composers to write countless operas, British composers have fought shy of setting Shakespeare, where Italians and Germans have not hesitated. Britten has earned the gratitude of our composers in his pioneering effort.

The concerts of David and Igor Oistrakh have been outstanding events. This partnership is unique in musical history; it is a significant rebuttal of the accusation that socialism destroys family life. Here are father and son forming an artistic partnership which has rarely been equalled by any pair of musical performers. One would have to go back to the eighteenth century to Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, when a father and son were both outstanding composers, and to J. S. Bach with his two sons, Wilhelm Friedmann and Carl Philipp Emanuel. Leopold Mozart exploited his son Wolfgang Amadeus as a child prodigy, but that is rather a different matter.

The Soviet Union, in March, provided us with another outstanding performer in the person of Bela Roudenko, a lyric coloratura soprano from the Ukraine, who is undoubtedly one of the finest singers in the world today.

Klemperer's "Fidelio"

Otto Klemperer's TV interview a few months back was perhaps the best thing the *Face to Face* series has given us. An immensely impressive personality emerged, a character moulded and toughened but not made cynical by a life-time of experience as a German Jewish intellectual. Particularly memorable were the contemptuous references to the American way of life ("Dollar, Dollar, Dollar") and the refusal to admit the existence of an iron curtain ("I must be free to conduct in Budapest and Moscow as well as London").

Dr. Klemperer has recently been able, in his production of Beethoven's *Fidelio* at Covent Garden, to show in musical practice the meaning of his progressive humanist attitude to life. Beethoven's opera is a great paean in praise of the forces of freedom, of the bourgeois democratic revolution of his day. It is Klemperer's triumph to have made this aspect of *Fidelio* real in a way which few conductors have done. The last scene of his Covent Garden production is a glorious evocation of the nineteenth-century revolution and the forces of human progress, including the emancipation of women, and this conception of the work informs his conducting from first to last.

Immoral Rearmament!

Anyone who reads the capitalist newspapers knows that M.R.A. has spent tens and even hundreds of thousands of pounds recently in buying up entire pages of the popular press (including *The Times*, *Observer* and *Guardian*) to propagate their crude anti-Communist views. It is, perhaps, less well known that local education authorities all over the country have been pressed to send their pupils en

masse to their film, *The Crowning Experience*, and that many have in fact done so. "Reports from various parts of the country," writes *Education*, official organ of the Association of Education Committees, "suggest that several local education authorities have been taken aback by the zeal of M.R.A. and that some of the schools which rashly accepted invitations to send parties . . . have had cause to regret their impetuosity."

The reason for this regret is, apparently, that the film—"propaganda first and last and all the time"—isn't good propaganda. "The story is far too trite to be convincing . . . the political and religious message of M.R.A. is hammered out. You must choose 'God's way or tyranny—M.R.A. or communism'." The high point is reached when an M.R.A. atomic scientist proclaims confidently that "we" are getting bigger and better missiles all the time. "The god of battles," comments *Education*, "is enlisted in the war of M.R.A. against communism."

The propaganda of the film "is so blatant and tendentious that it is almost unbelievable that education authorities should have been asked to send school parties to see it," writes *Education*, characterising the film as "rabid fanaticism" and "palpable mendacity". Perhaps so—but this misses the point; it was the local education authority of the school which actually took the decision to send the children, and it was surely their responsibility to vet the film.

In the meantime it is good to know that the film has boomeranged. Young people want to live, and are not likely to be impressed by the claim that "our" missiles carry God's message to the Russians. However, the incident shows that a sharp watch ought to be kept on M.R.A.'s activities among schoolchildren.

Soviet Research on Chartism

The interest of Soviet historians in the Chartist movement is well known; during the last year a number of articles have appeared in Soviet historical journals assessing the significance of the Chartist movement and especially the role and character of the National Charter Association as a political party of the working class—a discussion in which the British Marxist historian, A. L. Morton, has participated.

Now there has been published in Moscow a book entitled *The Struggle for Education during the Chartist movement*. The author, K. I. Salimova, a worker in the Institute of Methods and History of Education of the Academy of Educational Sciences, has made extremely good use of the wealth of Chartist literature—and especially journals—available in Moscow, particularly the *Northern Star*, the

London Democrat, the *Chartist Circular*, and Ernest Jones's *Notes to the People*.

Both before the development of Chartism, and during the Chartist movement itself, there were those who saw in the fight for education the only true road to the political emancipation of the workers—William Lovett, in particular, represented this outlook, especially after his release from jail in 1840. Commenting on this tendency and its uncompromising rejection by the Chartist movement as a whole, K. I. Salimova makes the important point that the Chartists were the first in the history of the world working-class movement to understand that the full right to education could only be gained for the workers after first winning political power. The state of education in the Soviet Union today strikingly confirms the correctness of this insistence.

In the final paragraph of her book, the author refers to the struggle of the Communist Party for a democratic system of education and for breaking down the barriers to a full secondary and higher education. Through consistently carrying on this struggle, she concludes, the Communist Party of Great Britain is keeping alive the tradition of the Chartists.

Election Campaign—Old Style

Capitalist candidates to Parliament must, sometimes, look back nostalgically to the good old days

of the "Rotten Boroughs" and bought elections. We are indebted to Mr. E. N. Williams' recent compilation of documents on *The Eighteenth Century Constitution* (Cambridge University Press) for the following plum, presented without comment. The borough in question was Burgage Borough, Appleby.

From letter of Philip Francis to Harriet Frace:

Appleby Castle,
Wednesday Morning, 7 July, 1802.

"My Own Dear Harriet,

The Fact is that yesterday morning, between 11 and 12 I was unanimously elected by one Elector, to represent this Ancient Borough in Parliament, and I believe I am the very first Member returned in the whole Kingdom. There was no other candidate, no opposition, no Poll demanded, Scrutiny or petition. So I had nothing to do but to thank the said Elector for the Unanimous Voice by which I was chosen. Then we had a great Dinner at the castle, and a famous Ball in the evening for that part of the Community which my lady calls the Ragamuffins. On Friday morning I shall quit this Triumphant Scene with flying colours, and a noble Determination not to see it again in less than seven years."

(From B. Francis and E. Keary (editors) *The Francis Letters*, Vol. II, p. 493.)

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at Marx Memorial Library, tickets 1s. from the Library or at door.

The Challenge of Marxism

*On the publication of the English edition of the "Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism"*¹

James Klugmann

FOR more than a century the opponents of Marxism have been busy "burying" it. How many books and articles have been written, how many pompous speeches delivered proclaiming Marxism bankrupt, refuted, defeated! How many funeral orations, how many post-mortems! Marxism was "out-dated", "impractical", "unrealistic", "alien" to this country, or to that race. But it was the ideas of the critics that were buried; the ideas of Marxism lived on, won new supporters, were put into practice, tested, developed further. Ideas became a material force, said Marx, when they gripped the masses. The ideas of Marxism gripped the masses, inspired them, guided them into action, and became in the course of it deepened and enriched. Reaction could kill Marxists, imprison or mutilate their bodies, but it could not imprison or kill the ideas of Marxism.

Words could not kill, nor could the war of intervention, economic blockade, political sabotage, nor could the might of Hitler's armies, nor the threats of Dulles. The ideas of Marxism emerged enriched by Lenin, by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, by the Communists throughout the world.

And so today Marxism-Leninism has become the outlook and inspiration of tens of millions, uniting men and women of different nations, different colours, different backgrounds, in a way that no other outlook—philosophical or religious—has ever done in history before. For a third of the population of the world, for the socialist world, it is the outlook of the overwhelming majority of the people. In another third of the world, the once colonial and semi-colonial lands, more and more people are moving towards it. And in the third part, the capitalist sector of the world, it is not only great Communist Parties like those in France and Italy that have embraced the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, but more and more people are coming under its influence. In fact, the strength and influence of Marxism is openly recognised by its enemies.

What is "the enemy" daily denounced by Adenauer or Franco? Who was it that McCarthy and the Federal Bureau of Investigation singled out for attack? What is it on which the capitalist-controlled radio, television and press concentrated their wrath in Britain, France and Italy? It is communism

and the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. Phoney psychologists are kept busy exorcising the neuroses of those whom the spectre of communism keeps awake at night.

Failing to defeat the ideas of Marxism in "straight" attacks, its opponents resort to cunning and falsify its ideas in order to be able to refute them, erecting their own Aunt Sallys to knock them down again. Scores and hundreds of books are written, lectures read, and speeches made explaining "what Marx really meant" and how his conceptions have been disproved. Special courses in Marxism are given to Foreign Office officials and the staff of M.I.5, American professors produce boundless theses on the nature of Marxism and the history of the Communist Parties. To keep students quiet special professors are engaged to confuse the ideas of Marxism in the faculties of famous universities. In time of war, for reasons of security, army staffs used scrambling machines that deliberately confuse the voice in order to deceive the enemy, and "scrambling" the ideas of Marxism has become a well-paid profession.

The fact that in every capitalist country reaction concentrates its attacks on one single ideology, on the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, is the highest compliment, the greatest tribute that could be paid. The German Socialist Bebel and the British Labour leader Keir Hardie both, in their time, strongly expressed the idea that when the capitalists praise you, you should beware. That is the moment to ask yourself and think what you are doing wrong. And so, conversely. A young Nigerian schoolboy, I remember, once wrote a simple letter to the Communist Party centre in Britain, saying roughly this: "Every day I read in the imperialist press of the horrors and errors of Marxism. Every day the imperialists are attacking you. I feel you must be right. I wish to know what you really stand for."

And so with every attack the ideas of Marxism-Leninism grow stronger, move more and more people into action, are tested and enriched. *Marxism has become the essential challenge of our time.*

A Timely Production

The understanding of Marxist ideas does not emerge spontaneously by itself. Workers can come through struggle and experience to fight against the effects of capitalism, sometimes to hate the general system of capitalism, sometimes, even, to yearn for

¹ *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, Lawrence & Wishart, 890 pp. 15s.

some better social system—socialism. But they cannot come by themselves, spontaneously, to master the profound science of socialism, the deepest, most extensive science of all because it embraces every aspect of human experience. The first words of the new manual *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* are:

“Mastery of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism requires serious and thoughtful study and, consequently, much work and time” (p. 15).

That is why the publication in English of *The Fundamentals* is so timely, so important an event. For the first time we now have available in English, within the scope of a single book, large though it is, a comprehensive study of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. The manual was prepared by a group of Soviet scholars, active in many different fields of science, culture, politics, headed by that well-known Marxist practical and theoretical leader, “the old Bolshevik”, Otto Kuusinen. The English edition has been edited by Clemens Dutt.

Comprehensive

Most important is its all-embracing, comprehensive character. The principle of the inter-relatedness of things is a deep principle of the Marxist approach. And this book deals with all the various fields showing how they relate the one to the other. The purpose of the book, in the words of its authors, is:

“To present in popular form the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism as a single and integrated science” (p. 13).

They are presented in the following order: Marxist-Leninist philosophy, including the materialist conception of history; Marxist-Leninist economic theory; the theory and tactics of the international Communist movement, including the appraisal of the most important trends in the present-day democratic movement; the theory of socialism and communism.

This is not, nor, as the authors say, is it intended to be, an “academic” study. Fundamental conceptions of Marxism and Leninism are applied to all the most complex and most urgent modern problems.

This is *creative Marxism*. It embraces all the modern experiences of Communists and Communist Parties throughout the world. Not only the experiences of the Soviet Union and the decisions of the Twentieth and Twenty-First Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, but the experiences of the Chinese Communist Party, of the Parties of Eastern Europe, of India, of France, Italy and Britain. It leads up to a full understanding of the decisions taken at the historic meeting of the Eighty-One Communist Parties at Moscow in November, 1960.

Presentation and Style

There are manuals and manuals, textbooks and textbooks. Some can be worthy but wordy, detailed but dull, thorough but dogmatic. But this work is neither wordy nor dull, nor dogmatic. On the contrary, despite the wealth and the depth of the ideas presented, the style is throughout simple. The technical terms of Marxism-Leninism, when they are used, are explained in simple language. For instance, when in the section on monopoly capitalism the book speaks of cartels, syndicates and trusts, these are explained in detail (p. 296). When the general crisis of capitalism is introduced, the whole conception of it is explained (p. 317). When opportunism is written of, it is defined (p. 379). When the term “dictatorship of the proletariat” is first used, a simple definition is given of it (p. 625). The book is broken up into a series of chapters, which themselves are broken into sections. It is eminently suitable for study.

It is very difficult in a book that is summing up the generalised conceptions of Marxism not to adopt a dogmatic style, but the book is thoroughly undogmatic. It is reasoned throughout. Anti-Marxist arguments are not dismissed or treated with unpleasant epithets but explained and argued with.

In short, this whole book—*Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*—is a magnificent gift to the working class and progressive people of the world and we in this country are deeply indebted to Comrade Kuusinen and his colleagues for what they have given us.

Marxist Philosophy

The first two parts of the book deal with the Marxist-Leninist world outlook and with the materialist conception of history. They treat of philosophical materialism, of dialectics, of the theory of knowledge, of the principles of the Marxist theory of history, of classes, class struggle and the state, of the role of the masses and of individuals in history, and of the Marxist conception of social progress. Many practical people engaged in day-to-day political struggle, and particularly in Britain, would hotly deny that “philosophy” is something that concerns them. “What have we to do with philosophy, or philosophy with us?” This attitude, above all, suits and helps capitalism. The capitalists like on the one hand to treat philosophy as something remote, to build up a conception of philosophers as erudite, absent-minded personalities dealing with abstractions of little concern with this world, while at the same time they are busy in a thousand different ways, day in, day out, at school, from the pulpit, in children’s and women’s magazines, in the millionaire press, theatre, cinema, radio, and above all, today, television, busy infiltrating, instilling

bourgeois ideas into the heads of the working class and the working people.

The truth is that you cannot escape from philosophy. In Molière's famous comedy *The Bourgeois Gentleman* there is a wonderful scene when the newly-rich Monsieur Jourdain is receiving lessons in etiquette—in how to conduct himself as a gentleman. His teacher is explaining to him the nature of poetry. They go on to prose. Monsieur Jourdain makes the amazing discovery that all that is not poetry is prose and that he, willy-nilly, quite unconsciously, all his long life, without knowing it, has been talking prose. This fact fills him with amazement. So it is with philosophy and the working people under capitalism. Consciously or unconsciously, in their heads are ideas, and these ideas always contain something of a philosophical attitude, something of an attitude to the world in which we live and man's place in it. Some people talk of "niggers" and "wogs", not knowing that they are embracing a most reactionary philosophy. Some accept that children have an inborn intelligence that can be decided at eleven, not knowing that they are, willy-nilly, in part at least, idealist philosophers. Some will be heard to remark, more in sorrow than in anger, that "there will always be wars", not realising that they are accepting a very definite, and very reactionary conception of history. How many times is this most reactionary of all thoughts expressed by working people: "You will never change human nature".

The point is this, *if you have not got in your head the theories of the working class, a working-class approach, a working-class philosophy, then, willy-nilly, consciously or unconsciously, you have in your head the theories of the ruling class, some or other aspects of bourgeois philosophy.* In a country like Britain most working-class people have, in fact, a mixture, a medley, in their heads. I mean that their experience of capitalism and their practice of class struggle in one form or another, leads them to reject one or other aspect of a bourgeois outlook, whilst at the same time whole numbers of bourgeois prejudices, illusions, confusions, still remain in their heads. The practical struggle can help them to clear their heads but can never give them the working-class outlook that alone can fully dispose of a bourgeois outlook. *This needs a conscious study of Marxist-Leninist philosophy.*

World as it Actually is

The great strength of Marxism-Leninism that distinguishes it from all other philosophical approaches, the *Fundamentals* explains, is, firstly, that it does not recognise the existence of any supernatural forces or creatures. It rests squarely on reality, on the real world in which we live. It liberates

mankind, once and for all, from superstition and age-old spiritual bondage. It encourages independent, free and consistent thought:

"Marxism-Leninism regards the world such as it actually is, without adding an invented hell or paradise. It proceeds from the fact that all nature, including man himself, consists of matter with its different properties.

"And nature, as well as all its individual phenomena, is in constant process of development. The laws of that development have not been ordained by God and do not depend on man's will. They are intrinsic in nature itself and are fully knowable. There are no inherently unknowable things in the world; there are only things which are still unknown, but which will become known through science and practice" (p. 16).

Laws of Nature and Society

Century after century scientists have been getting to grips with, coming to understand, the laws of nature. No one can defy the laws of nature, but when you really understand them, really master them, you can make them serve man. It is no use defying the laws of gravity. You can jump out of the window shouting as you go: "I am a free personality, I will not be dictated to", but you will, like any other body, descend with the speed which science has long calculated and reach the bottom with a bump, which science has long foreseen. You cannot defy the force of gravity but when men studied it they learnt to put in the air things that would fly, and today they can launch vessels into space and soon a man himself will ascend into space and make his way to other planets.

So, too, is it with the laws of history, the laws of social development. You can ignore them, despise them, deny them, but, willy-nilly, you are caught up with them and bound by them. You become free to the extent that you recognise them, come to grips with them, come to understand them, come to master them.

It is a favourite Aunt Sally of the opponents of Marxism to interpret Marxism as a purely determinist view of history in which men, men's thoughts and actions can play no role. And the *Fundamentals* magnificently shows the falsity of this conception. Marxism-Leninism teaches that there are laws of social development which are independent of man's will, that these laws cannot be defied, but it also shows how once the laws of social development can be understood, man's conscious efforts, particularly in the bringing about of socialist society, play an all-important role. It shows us why self-appointed "great men" like Hitler, despite all their military power, defied the laws of history and ended in fiasco, and it shows us, too, how those who, like Marx or Lenin, more than any others understood the "necessities" of social development, were able

more than any others to be free to influence the course of development of society.

No Closed System

Most of the earlier philosophies were, as it were, "closed systems". You were presented with a system of ideas which summed up the full truth. This was all that you could know or needed to know. You took it or left it. With Plato or with Kant, with Nietzsche, Bishop Berkeley, or even Hegel, the processes of knowledge, once you had accepted their approach, was to end. The strength of Marxism-Leninism is that at no stage and in no way is it a closed system, it presents an approach by which you can understand reality, an approach to the developments of nature, of man and his society, of thought. But this approach of achieving knowledge of reality is never-ending. Marxism itself is never, as it were, completed. Marxists are continually adding to, contributing to, deepening the Marxist-Leninist approach, which will be enriched from generation to generation. As the *Fundamentals* puts it:

"The comprehension of the general laws of dialectics, like that of the laws of other sciences, is bound to deepen with the modifications of practice and the development of science. It is bound to be enriched by new experience, new knowledge. . . .

"The dialectical materialist thesis of the concrete nature of truth warns us against general formulas and ready-made schemes in the treatment of facts" (pp. 130-131).

The Marxist historian does not *solve* the problem of writing history by adopting a Marxist approach. On the contrary, he has to study far more thoroughly than is the practice of most bourgeois historians the rich complexity of social conflicts, class struggles, conflicting ideas and conflicting personalities in all their complexity. Marxism, whether in history, science or daily political struggle, is no replacement for the hard work of studying and assessing each concrete situation.

Thus the Marxist approach to things militates against passivity. The understanding of the general course of social development moves man to play his part in hastening the process of history. Sooner or later there will be socialism, but it is not a matter of indifference when it will come, nor how it will come. The study of society shows the new possibilities of preventing a third world war, but that does not mean that peace is inevitable. Whether or not peace is preserved depends on the conscious activity and struggle of men and women, and particularly of the working class.

The Role of Ideas

One of the favourite Aunt Sallys of enemies of Marxism is to claim that historical materialism belittles or denies the role of ideas in history, but this

is precisely the opposite of the truth. The Marxist approach shows how, on a given economic basis, certain types and trends of theories and institutions play an enormous role in determining the future course of events. The superstructure that arises on a given basis reacts back on that basis. Indeed, as the *Fundamentals* so well shows,

"Having arisen, owing to the maturing of certain material requirements of society, ideas in their turn exercise an influence on the course of social development. . . .

"Communists would contradict themselves if, on the one hand, they tried to give the working people a scientific communist ideology, a feeling of class solidarity, internationalism, and so on, while on the other they denied the importance of the subjective factor, i.e. of conscious human activity in history" (p. 168).

In the faculties of philosophy of many universities the study of philosophy is more like a spiritual pastime. You study the philosophies of the past, but no one expects you to implement a given philosophy. Philosophical discussion is something completely separated from life. *The essence of Marxism is that its acceptance implicitly contains within itself the acceptance of a course of action that will bring about a change in society for the benefit of mankind.* It is the opposite of academic. For Marxists, without the battle of ideas and without the development of a Party—which is the main instrument for propagating these ideas—the necessary social changes would not be brought about.

"Without the mobilising, organising and transforming work of new ideas it is impossible to accomplish the tasks with which society is confronted by the development of its material life. The higher the level of revolutionary consciousness, the more widespread revolutionary ideas become among the masses, the sooner and easier the problems confronting society are solved" (p. 170).

The Political Economy of Capitalism

Marxists approach all things in their development and change. They study how all things come into being, develop and go out of existence, and in this same way approach the problem of capitalism. Only the Marxist-Leninist approach can show how capitalism, which was once so revolutionary and progressive a factor of history, replacing the old system of feudalism, developed and in its turn became a brake on future social progress.

It is, therefore, not by accident that a large amount of the third part of the *Fundamentals* deals with the modern stage of capitalism—imperialism, monopoly capitalism, and then the stages of the general crisis of capitalism.

We are enabled to study how with imperialism, and still more with the general crisis of capitalism,

modern capitalism turns, as it were, back on itself and becomes the enemy of everything that was progressive and revolutionary in the early stages of capitalism. Modern monopoly capitalism attacks the vast majority of the people; it subordinates to itself not only the overwhelming majority in colonial or semi-colonial countries, but also the great majority of the people in its own country—the working class, the peasantry, the town petty-bourgeoisie, intellectuals and professional people, and the smaller capitalists. Modern monopoly capitalism turns against its own earlier conceptions of bourgeois democracy, betrays the ideas of national sovereignty which earlier capitalism initiated, turns against the progressive philosophical ideas of capitalism and its progressive cultural achievements. *All this opens up with a new sharpness the historical mission of the working class as the essential leader in the fight for peace, democracy, national sovereignty and the defence of the cultural heritage, and this conception prepares the way for understanding the tactics of the immediate struggles, which are dealt with in the next part of the "Fundamentals"*.

Falsehoods Corrected

In the part that deals with the economy of capitalism many of the main distortions and Aunt Sallys of anti-Marxists are decisively dealt with. A favourite distortion is the falsified view of what often is known as "impoverishment". The critics claim that Marxists consider that the situation of the working class under capitalism must inevitably get worse and worse from year to year, and having erected this Aunt Sally they proceed with all "brilliance" to knock it down again. As the *Fundamentals* puts it:

"In particular, the Marxist theses concerning the tendency towards a worsening position of the working class is represented as a dogma, according to which, under capitalism, an absolute deterioration of the workers' living conditions takes place *uninterruptedly* from year to year and from decade to decade. However, Marx had in mind not a continuous process, but a *tendency* of capitalism, which is realised unevenly in different countries and periods owing to deviations and irregularities, and which is counteracted by other forces.

"One of those opposing forces is the struggle of the working class to raise wages and improve working conditions. After the Second World War this struggle was more intense than ever before . . . furthermore, the achievements gained by the socialist countries compelled the bourgeoisie to make concessions to the working people.

"All this, of course, could not fail to have its effect. The workers in a number of countries saw the opportunity to improve their position and seized it. Clearly, this cannot in the slightest serve as a refutation of Marxism" (pp. 291-292).

State Monopoly Capitalism

A very useful section deals with the development of state monopoly capitalism. The complex problem of nationalisation under capitalism is dealt with in detail, showing how on the one hand monopoly capitalism does favour a *certain limited, definite type* of nationalisation, one which is restricted to a few key industries, one in which high compensation is paid to the former owners, one in which the nationalised industries provide "cheap services" to monopoly capitalism, one in which the key positions in the nationalised industries remain in the hands of the capitalists; and one in which, especially, the state which owns and controls the nationalised sector of the economy is firmly in the hands of the monopolists. But *even within capitalism* the working class can fight for a different, more advanced, more democratic type of nationalisation, extended to new industries, radically reducing the compensation, democratising the key positions, and therefore the struggle around nationalisation is fought within capitalism as part of the class struggle, though the full socialist solution can only be achieved when political power has passed into the hands of the working people led by the working class.

Very interesting, too, in this connection is the section dealing with the type of state capitalism which is developing in a number of former colonial countries which have now won their independence. There is a qualitative difference between the type of state capitalism in a number of young states of the East and the state monopoly capitalism of the older Western capitalist countries.

"The state-capitalist forms of economic life developing in the young states of the East should not be confused with what is now observed in the developed capitalist countries of the West, where *state monopoly* capitalism prevails, which means an overall reactionary role of the monopolies, which fully subordinate the state machine to themselves. In the countries of the East state-capitalism in its present form is not an instrument of the imperialist monopolies; on the contrary, it was called into existence by the anti-imperialist movement and is objectively aimed against the extension of these monopolies in the East" (p. 511).

Theory and Tactics of the International Communist Movement

This part, which is the largest single section of the *Fundamentals*, deals with the historic mission of the working class, with the great October Revolution, with the Marxist-Leninist party, with the policy of unity of action of the working class and the unity of all democratic sections of the people, with the alliance of the working class and peasantry under capitalism, with the stages of the people's national-liberation movement against colonialism, with the

struggle of the peoples of the capitalist countries for sovereignty and in defence of democracy, with the struggle of the peoples for peace and with the various forms of transition to a socialist revolution.

In the present world situation, with a deepening general crisis of capitalism, *the role of the working class stands out with greater relief than ever before as the class that fights for and stands for the interests of the whole of humanity.* It is the working class that alone can lead the struggle for peace, for national sovereignty, for democracy, for defence of the cultural heritage; that can unite under its leadership all sections of the people against monopoly capitalism and at times even sections of the middle and smaller bourgeoisie. It is a new factor that arises from the new world relation of class forces that the working class can lead the vast majority of the people, not only in the general democratic struggle, but, under certain favourable circumstances, can take its allies with it right into the process of building socialism.

Communist-Socialist Unity

The *Fundamentals* points out, and here it quotes from a statement of Professor G. D. H. Cole, that in present conditions communist/socialist unity should be and can be extended not only to the immediate issues like wages and rents, like peace and democracy, but also to long-term issues including the achievement of a society where there will be social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. The truth of this section of the book has been shown again and again in recent months in Britain by the common struggle of Labour Party and Communist workers for the defence of Clause 4 of the Labour Party Constitution. In the same section the *Fundamentals* insists on the need to reject sectarian approaches to socialist workers:

“The first and decisive thing in this matter is a correct approach to the socialist workers. The indignation of Communists at the repeated treachery of a number of Social-Democratic leaders is understandable but it is no reason for regarding all Socialists as ‘agents of imperialism’ and for rejecting contact and a regular exchange of opinion with them. Attacking all Socialists indiscriminately only plays into the hands of the real enemies of working-class unity” (p. 456).

Peaceful Coexistence

Very effective in the book is the whole key section on the fight for peace, the new possibilities of peaceful coexistence and the all-important need for the unity of all forces striving for peace. “Communists,” it explains,

“readily support any peaceful initiative, whatever its sources; they are ready to act together with all

organisations, pursuing anti-war and anti-imperialist aims, regardless of the motives—pacifist, religious, moral or others—which prompt these people and organisations. And this is not a political manoeuvre, as reactionary propaganda alleges, but a result of the Communists’ firm conviction that in our time a war will inevitably plunge humanity into an abyss of tremendous sufferings and will for a long time impede its social, economic and cultural progress” (pp. 573-74).

The whole chapter on peace forms an excellent background on which to study the decisions of the November 1960 Meeting of the Eighty-One Communist Parties.

Forms of Transition to Socialism

Towards the end of this part the *Fundamentals* discusses in detail, in all its rich variation and complexity, the new forms of transition to socialism that already open up in the People’s Democracies of Eastern Europe, in People’s China and other countries of the East, and the possibilities of yet new forms of transition to socialism. It shows clearly that there are certain essential factors without which the advance to socialism is not possible in any country or at any time. Without the leading role of the workers, without the alliance of the working class with wide sections of the working people, without the clear understanding and struggle for a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, without a Marxist-Leninist party in a leading position, without the understanding and practice of international working-class solidarity, there can be no successful advance to socialism.

But when this is said, it has, at the same time, to be clearly understood that the concrete, the specific, *forms* of advance to socialism will differ from country to country, from period to period, according to the international relation of class forces, according to the relation of class forces in the particular country, according to the specific customs, traditions, institutions and stage of economic development of each country. It is the revisionists who, by and large, attempt to revise out of existence, to reject, these essential factors, without which the advance to socialism is impossible. The dogmatists, on the other hand, refuse to look at the new possibilities arising from the new relation of forces and the particular, specific forms of advance appropriate to each particular country.

Communists and Violence

In this connection the *Fundamentals* decisively rejects the distortion so often put forward by the enemies of Marxism, that Communists stand for violence in and for itself. This is the opposite of the truth.

When violence was necessary in the socialist

revolution it was imposed by the bourgeoisie and not as a result of the aim of the working class. Lenin always emphasised that "the working class would certainly prefer to take over power *peacefully*". When in 1917, twice for a brief period, Lenin saw a hope of a peaceful transition to socialism in Russia, he was ready to seize it. Today, because of the new relation of class forces in the world, because of the new possibilities of the working class to unite around itself the vast majority of the people in the struggle for peace, democracy, national sovereignty and defence of the cultural heritage, because of the fact that monopoly capitalism attacks all other sections of the people, because of the strength of the socialist sector of the world, the peaceful development of the socialist revolution has become much more possible than it ever was before in previous history. This recognition does not mean that Marxists have become reformists. *It is the new strength of the forces of socialism, their new capacity to wage the class struggle and to win allies in the struggle that open up the new possibilities.*

In the same context, the *Fundamentals* treats the role that Parliament can play, in certain countries in the new conditions, in the transition to socialism:

"The parliamentary method of transition to socialism would give the working class a number of advantages. The formation of a new power by so traditional an institution, as Parliament is for many countries, would at once endow it with the necessary authority, facilitating the subsequent socialist transformations. Any resistance to the socialist revolution would in this case be illegal, not only *de facto* but also *de jure* and aimed against the will of the nation expressed by the Parliament.

"Of course, it would be wrong to think that power could be won by parliamentary means on any election day. Only reformists who are convinced that profound social changes are decided by a mere vote could believe this. Marxist-Leninists do not have so primitive a conception of the coming of the working class to power through Parliament. The fundamental issues of social life are always decided by a struggle of the popular masses and by the actual relation of class forces. The parliamentary struggle ensures transition to socialism only if it is supported by the mass revolutionary movement of the working class, and of broad sections of the population" (p. 619).

Socialism and Communism

The last part of the *Fundamentals* deals with "Socialism and Communism", with chapters on the dictatorship of the proletariat and proletarian democracy, on the main economic tasks in the transition to socialism, on the main features of the socialist mode of production, on the socio-political and cultural aspects of socialist society, on the world socialist system, on the transition from socialism to communism, and finally on communist society.

It has always been one of the strengths of the

Marxist-Leninist approach to society that it enables people to see "the aspect of things to come". It shows not only the new type of society—socialism—that will replace capitalism, but indicates the only class that can lead the advance to socialism and the methods of struggle to achieve and to build the new society. It is difficult to single out any particular section of this moving, inspiring final part of the book. The section on the problems of the world socialist systems, the qualitatively new type of relationships between the socialist countries, is of special interest. But no one can fail to be moved by the treatment of the nature of communist society, the higher stage of socialist society, the goal for which Communists everywhere are striving. The penultimate chapter brilliantly shows the next steps ahead for the Soviet Union and other socialist countries in making the gradual transition from socialism to communism and, therefore, in a sense, communism is brought nearer to us because we see how within *existing* socialist society communism is already beginning to be prepared.

Steps on the Road to Communism

We can study how within the Soviet Union, and, for that matter, the rest of the socialist world, the material bases for communism are being developed, how, step by step, the differences between the workers and collective farmers, between mental and manual workers, are already *beginning* to be obliterated. We can follow the steps now being taken for that improvement of education that is necessary for passing into communist society. We can see how *already* the withering away of the state is being prepared by the passing over of certain state functions to socialist organisations; we can see the tremendous role of the Communist Party in leading the people from socialism to communism; and we can study the magnificent new conception that it will be the socialist world as a whole and not what is now the most advanced part of it, that will make a common entry into communist society. We can see how there is no Chinese Wall between socialism and communism, but a gradual passing over from the one into the other.

But that does not mean it is not tremendously inspiring to read the picture painted of the character of the communist society of the future. For communism is no longer a vision and a dream; in the words of the *Fundamentals*:

"The achievements of modern science and technology and the discoveries that they are on the threshold of making, provide tangible and real prospects of satisfying all the needs of the members of society, not only as regards prime necessities but also as regards goods and services that are considered as luxuries today" (p. 858).

Communism demands material abundance, and if war can be prevented and science organised within a socialist society, that abundance is within our hands.

To Each According to His Needs

In communist society the watchword will be no longer as in socialism: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work", but "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". And this demands, of course, a new type of man and woman, with a new social outlook. "How will it be possible," critics say, "for men and women to receive according to their needs? Given that right they will hoard, accumulate property, seize all they can lay their hands on." But here you can see the full reactionary content of that favourite bourgeois adage that "you cannot change human nature". It is, of course, true that you could not organise communism with people as they have been moulded by capitalist society, with capitalist egoism and capitalist ethics, that arise from the exploitation and scarcities of capitalism. Communist society demands a new sort of man, but it is, precisely, the dialectics of history that in the process first, of defeating capitalism, and, secondly, of building socialism, that men and women in changing the nature of society through mass collective struggle, change their own nature and fit themselves for communist society. *The process of winning a communist society brings into existence the type of men and women needed in such a society.*

A Fully Social Outlook

It is hard under capitalism to have a social outlook, but already, in the course of struggle against capitalism, men and women band themselves together in trade unions and other organisations and at the highest level in Communist Parties, and learn, in the process of struggle, a new, more social, outlook. In the whole process of building socialism, when the distinction between working for yourself and working for society begins to come to an end, when there is no exploitation any longer, when men and women come to see the equation of their individual and their collective needs, the ground is prepared for that fuller social outlook needed by communism.

In the process of building socialism, already essential differences between town and country, between collective farmers and industrial workers begin to diminish. As machines more and more take away from work its monotonous, drab, repetitious character and, as higher education is spread to more and more sections of the people, step by step the gulf between manual and mental labour begins to be ended. Under communism all the essential differences between work

in the country and work in industry, between mental and manual labour, will disappear, all class differences will be ended and there will be only worker intellectuals in town and country.

Changing Human Nature

History has shown us again and again how human nature *is* changed in practice. Those who used to mock at the capacity of the Russian people to build an advanced industrial and technical society are now answered by the rockets hurtling into space. Those who used to sneer at the "backward Chinese people" are already answered by the achievements of the Chinese liberation armies, where simple, once "backward" peasants and workers led great armies, and by the lightning growth of Chinese industry and technique.

The whole of modern experience teaches us that fantastic creative capacities lie within ordinary working people. You can take a lump of uranium and it is just a substance, but, if you know the secret of how to release it, there is concealed within it a fantastic energy and force. So it is with working people. Within them there is a fantastic creative capacity—*once it is released*. The problem is how to release it. And it is precisely in the struggle, first against capitalism, then in the long complex building of socialism, the new collective society, that these fantastic forces will be released and we shall see for the first time the full all-round development of human personality.

In a sense it is with the victory of communism that the real history of humanity will begin.

"Man differs fundamentally from all living creatures in that his intellect and labour save him from having to passively adjust himself to his environment, enable him to remake this environment in conformity with the interests and needs of mankind. And although mankind has existed for many thousands of years, it is only communism that ushers in the era of its full maturity and ends the prolonged pre-history when the life of each man individually and the life of society as a whole were shaped by alien forces, natural and social, which were beyond men's control" (pp. 874-875).

For the first time one will be able to speak of a *united mankind as a whole* and test the infinite potentiality of a world population no longer divided between themselves but united in their struggle to bind nature to the service of man.

The chapter on communism shows how history, as it were, comes full circle and mankind moves from the primitive communism of scarcity to the future—communism of abundance.

The Importance of the "Fundamentals"

The *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* is, perhaps, of particular importance for Britain. For,

as a result of the particular development of the British Labour movement within the centre, first of world trade and then of world imperialism, the temptation was especially strong for a section of the workers to limit their struggles to the *effects* of capitalism whilst accepting the capitalist system as a whole. Bourgeois ideology, capitalist ideas, developed with especial strength in the British Labour movement. Reformist ideas managed to obtain for a period a peculiarly great influence on the British proletariat and, precisely, one of the forms this took, was the development of strong mass organisations fighting the *immediate* struggles, whilst the weakness was lack of socialist ideas, of socialist consciousness. Marx and Engels pointed out long ago, that when the "marriage" between the great mass movement of the British working class and the ideas, consciousness of socialism, can be "arranged", then the British working class will be invincible. To bring about this unity of mass struggle and socialist consciousness has been, in a sense, the essential task of the Communist Party in Britain, since its foundation. But there is no doubt, and the historical reasons for it are clear, that the lack of clear scientific socialist ideas has been a constant weakness in British Labour history.

Seen in individual terms it is often a tragedy. How many magnificent men and women of the working class in Britain, from the age of twelve or fourteen, have devoted themselves to the cause of Labour, joined their trade unions, perhaps, too, the I.L.P., or the Labour Party, given their life for the Labour movement, sacrificed, suffered, and even starved, and yet, at last, have died not really understanding the cause for which they have fought, not really understanding what is this capitalist society in which they lived, what is the nature of exploitation and of capitalist crises, what is the nature of socialist society that will replace capitalism and, above all, how to get from capitalism to socialism. There are many, many, such men and women in the British Labour movement still today.

A Favourable Moment

Yet this is a critical and most favourable moment for bringing to the working class in Britain and its allies the ideas of scientific socialism, the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. Never before was the situation more favourable. Within the Labour movement there is, today, a tumult of discussion, debate, exchange of opinion and ideas, in which are being posed not only immediate wages and hours questions but deep questions of war and peace, of democracy and of the nature of capitalism and socialism itself. There is a growing demand, as reflected in the Scarborough decisions, to come to grips with the theory and ideas of socialism.

Amongst the young intellectuals, particularly the

students, there is a deep probing of ideas going on, and the student movement in recent years has passed through successive stages. There was a first stage of, as it were, revolt in the superstructure, rebellion against accepted orthodox ideas against the Establishment, an anti-, a negative, movement, but, for its time, progressive. This, then, passed into a more mass and a more active struggle around the issues of peace, disarmament and anti-colonialism. But now, today, the masses of young intellectuals who have engaged in struggle for peace are beginning to ask deeper questions, as to what gives rise to war and how to bring about a society in which the problem of war can be ended for all time. And so a turn to Marxism, a new interest, the purchase of literature, organisation of lectures and discussions, which is developing again as once it developed in the thirties.

Moreover, many fine men and women are finding their way to the Communist Party; there is a new generation of active Communists who are fulfilling a magnificent role in the mass movement, especially as shop stewards, trade union leaders, etc., but who have not yet come to grips with the fundamental conceptions of Marxism-Leninism.

A Welcome Gift

That is why the publication of this book is so immensely timely and why it is of such great importance for us. It does not, of course, replace the patient educational work that has been developed in Britain. The Communist Party itself in Britain has developed out of all recognition. In its earliest days it tended to teach Marxism-Leninism in a generalised abstract form, but now so much work has been done applying the conceptions of Marxism-Leninism to the specific problems of Britain—work on the nature of British history, and in particular of British Labour history, work on the nature of British imperialism, work on the nature of the British state, work on the structure of British capitalism, work, above all, on the *British Road to Socialism*. Of course, the main task in Britain remains to spread the understanding of Marxism in its concrete application to British problems. But to do this it is necessary to spread the understanding of the generalised conceptions, the integrated theories of Marxism-Leninism, and in this the *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism* can play a most positive role.

The problem immediately arises of how best to make use of this gift. There has been, fairly consistently, one big weakness in the work of Marxist-Leninist education inside Britain, a weakness which I understand is common to most capitalist countries. That is, that we have organised many successful schools, many successful discussions, many successful public meetings and forums, but there has been,

all along, a great weakness in self-study, in reading. Knowledge, alas, cannot be injected or taken in the form of pills. An understanding of socialist science is never provided in its most effective form through lectures; it is when the individual himself wrestles with the material, makes his own personal effort in mastering it, i.e., through reading, through self-study, tested in discussion, that an understanding of socialist ideas is best achieved.

The publication of this important work, therefore, puts before all Marxists in Britain, and all sympathetic to Marxism, the task of organising *systematic* study. Already in London, for example, many workers are subscribing to the purchase of copies of the book. The problem now is to organise systematic study, to form groups for mutual discussion. And the Education Department of the Party will make proposals to this effect. The book, moreover, should serve as a bridge to the study of the classics of Marxism-Leninism and not as an "alibi" for keeping away from them.

Conclusion

Reading the *Fundamentals* one inevitably asks oneself who else could have published such a work. Can you imagine a book called the "Fundamentals of Social Democracy", dealing with all aspects of life, philosophical, historical, with problems of political economy, with tactical problems of the advance to socialism, with the nature of socialist society? The main Social Democratic theoreticians of the West are busy *renouncing* socialism, not propagating it. Can you imagine such a book published by any one religion, to show the people of the whole world how to build a good society in this world and not in the next? Despite the progressive role that nationalists are playing in many colonial or former colonial countries, can you conceive of a work published by any one group of nationalists in any country that would really inspire the different peoples of the East and of the West? Can you imagine the logical positivists, or modern scholastics providing such a work? The very essence of the modern philosophers is to provide a philosophy that you can discuss as a pastime but not act on.

How was it possible that such a work could be compiled? It became possible precisely through the successful achievements of the Communist Parties, of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in particular, but not by any means of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union alone. The Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union laid the basis for the preparation of such a work.

The discussion at the 1957 Moscow Meeting of World Communist Parties tremendously contributed to the ideas outlined in the *Fundamentals* and these ideas have been taken a stage further at the recent Moscow Conference. Each individual Com-

munist Party has made its contribution, for the development of Marxism-Leninism is such that every Communist Party, and for that matter every individual Communist, can make his contribution. The enriching of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism is a *vast international collective undertaking*.

There have been in the past many progressive philosophies, philosophies of rising classes. With the rise of capitalism came many penetrating ideas. But the fact is that no previous class, before the working class, could look reality full in the face. For however much it represented a step forward for humanity it contained within itself some new form of exploitation by the minority over the majority and, therefore, always it had limitations in its conception of reality—of reality in nature, of reality in society, of reality in the history of thought—because a class that exploits others can never look reality completely full in the face.

The working class is the first class that acts in the real interests of the whole of humanity. Socialist revolution represents a step forward for the vast majority of humanity. The working class has nothing to hide; it is prepared to face the end of its own existence as a class, as we move to a fully classless society.

With Marxist-Leninist ideas we can now envisage practically, concretely, the existence of a united humanity, no longer divided within itself. It is only proper that as space rockets make their approaches to other planets we should begin to see the end of pre-history in our own world. There have been over many centuries great thinkers who dreamed dreams and saw visions of a world without poverty, a world without war, a world without oppression. Now we can see the *practical* possibility to make this dream come true. As is said so well in the *Fundamentals*, the aim of Marxism-Leninism is not just the vast increase of the material wealth, not just to find a new and better social organisation, but to bring about a society where each individual can have his most complete development of his capacity. The aim of it all is the fullest development of the potentialities of man. In the concluding words of the *Fundamentals*:

"There is no limit, nor can there be any, to the enquiring human mind, to the striving of man to put the forces of nature at his service, to define all nature's secrets.

"Nor will man ever cease his efforts to improve the structure of the society in which he lives, the forms of public self-government, the way of life, the norms of human behaviour and contact in the community.

"What a boundless field of activity will be open before communist society in the development of the ability and personality of all its members, in achieving the physical and spiritual perfection of the people themselves!" (pp. 876-877).

The Tory Attack on the Social Services

Katherine Hood

WHEN Mr. Enoch Powell was appointed Minister of Health last autumn it was like a bad weather forecast—only a matter of time before some deep depression engulfed us. Here, after all, was the man who had condemned the whole council-house system as “immoral and socially damaging”; who had seriously posed the question “why should any social service be provided without a test of need?”; who had actually resigned from office with Mr. Peter Thorneycroft because the Government were not prepared to cut social service expenditure to his liking. Unlike many chosen nowadays for office Mr. Powell is not a member of the “cousinhood”—he was educated at a grammar school with scholarships all the way. So the choice of this eccentric man as Minister of Health was a genuine symptom that the Government wanted to get tough—even if not as tough as Mr. Powell would like. And it was not long before the attacks on the National Health Service were announced—doubled prescription charges, another 10d. on the weekly insurance contribution, increased charges for dentures and spectacles, charges for welfare foods and the rest.

According to the *Evening Standard* Mr. Powell has since been apologising to Tory back-benchers for not having succeeded in imposing much severer cuts. And, indeed, these cuts are mild in comparison with what the Tory Bow Group and Tory conferences have been advocating. The demand for cuts in the social services has actually been growing in volume for some time, and the proposals now being made are far more sweeping than ever before. It is urged, for example, in Bow Group publications that parents should pay for their children's schooling and for the full cost of school meals; that free school milk should be abolished; that state retirement pensions and family allowances should only be payable after a means test; that differential rent schemes whereby the rent is fixed by reference to the tenant's income should be made compulsory on all council tenants; that hospital patients should pay for their board. . . . And so on.

Listed baldly like this, such proposals can be recognised as involving a formidable onslaught on living standards from which probably 80 per cent of the population would automatically recoil. Taken one by one they comprise the sort of thing that

the Tories may well try to implement bit by bit. If they succeed, we shall be looking round in a few years time wondering where our beautiful welfare state has got to. For attacks of this sort are seldom made simultaneously in one grand offensive; a nibble here and a nibble there, then a big bite is the more usual process. While the nibbling goes on, public opinion is prepared.

For many months now the Tories have been trying to create a climate of opinion which is favourable to these attacks. Outright demands for cuts in social services were initially voiced only in fairly narrow circles like the Bow Group publications and the more exclusive weeklies; they would then hit the headlines as a speech from the floor of the Tory Party Conference sandwiched in among the calls for birching, flogging and capital punishment. But they are now finding their way into the national press, not so much in the form of precise demands, but in the form of arguments which are deliberately designed to create an attitude of mind which would make such cuts acceptable.

The Tory Argument for Cuts

At the risk of tedium it is important to set out in some detail the line of argument that is being put across. In the Tories' own more “theoretical” publications it goes roughly like this:

“Primary poverty in this country has virtually disappeared in the sense that nobody is actually starving any longer or without a roof to his head. Indeed, we now have a level of affluence such as we never had before. Our social services were designed for an epoch when primary poverty was still the main problem; the time has therefore come to redesign them in the light of up-to-date conditions.

“The first point is that it is very wasteful to have services which go automatically to everyone at a time when more and more citizens are in a position to pay for them themselves. On the whole it is only those who can't pay for them who should be given them free. This, of course, requires a test of need which by tradition is distasteful, so an up-to-date and less distasteful method of applying means tests—i.e. through the Inland Revenue—might well be considered. Meanwhile, those who can't afford to

pay for themselves will in any case diminish in number as time passes.

"It is not only wasteful to give free services and subsidies to people who can well afford to pay for themselves, it is very unfair; it means the less well-off pay for the better-off. Why, for instance, should the tenant of a private landlord subsidise a council tenant who is much better off than himself?

"Apart from this the universal automatic covering of people against sickness or retirement etc. has a bad effect on character. It undermines people's self-reliance and sense of responsibility. 'Spoon-feeding' people whether they need it or not, has a corrupting effect; it tends to create a massive inertia. A paternal state means a servile state. State activity means bureaucracy; free enterprise on the other hand is healthy and progressive.

"And while on the subject of state-run services, it should be observed that too much state interference and state regulation is unhealthy. State schemes require heavy general taxation; this stifles initiative, destroys the incentive to earn and produce more, restricts talent and enterprise.

"Moreover, state services and controls have created in the public mind a false sense of values. They do not realise, for instance, how much it costs to build a house because rents have been kept artificially low. Equally the real cost of drugs under the National Health Service ought to be brought home to the public. If all pensions were paid for entirely out of weekly contributions the public would have a more realistic understanding of their cost.

"The Tories are well on the way to establishing an 'opportunity' state in which everyone can pay for himself and take a pride in doing so, can stand proudly on his own feet because he has bought his own house, paid for his children's schooling, paid for his own pension, paid for his own doctor, done it all by his own endeavours and owes nothing to anyone. Thus the Tories stand for creative freedom for the individual to be self-supporting, self-respecting, and to rise to the top unfettered by state regulation."

Nobody can claim that the above exposition is in any degree a caricature. There is not a single daily newspaper, with the exception of the *Daily Worker*, which has not at some time used some of the arguments produced above—reduced, of course, to the style of language to which their readers are accustomed. And there are some daily newspapers which use this kind of argument habitually; drip, drip, drip—a little of the poison is put in, day in, day out. What is more, it is having some effect. Can any reader put his hand on his heart and swear that he has never had these sorts of things said to him—not just by well-to-do politically-conscious Tories, but by quite ordinary decent working-class

people? It would be surprising if it were not so. For how is it that the Tories have been able to get returned to office in three successive elections if not by confusing people's minds, and deliberately creating a climate of opinion favourable to themselves? With, of course, the help of right-wing social democracy, whose part in all this we shall consider later. But first we need to have a look at the real motives of the ruling class when it comes to the question of state-run services under capitalism.

The Ruling Class and State Intervention

The attitude of the ruling class to state activity of any sort has always been conditioned by the two-fold object of assisting the profit-making system to flourish and maintaining class privilege. It follows that the Tories are *for* all state activity which helps these objects. The assumption that Tories like to keep state intervention and interference to a minimum so as to allow free and unfettered play to the progressive and dynamic forces of private enterprise is based on a nostalgic and purely subjective craving for *laissez-faire* in the economic field; this craving has had no basis in reality since the second half of the nineteenth century. The fact that there has been a vast growth in state activity over the last twenty years or so has less to do with any growth in state-run social services than it has to do with active state promotion of the interests of private capital. Thus by far the biggest item of Government expenditure—about one-third of the total—is the arms expenditure. Yet you seldom hear a Tory complaining about the size and scope of the arms bill. Why not? The main reason is, of course, hatred of the Soviet Union, but a subsidiary reason is that there is hardly an engineering firm in the country that does not get its bit of defence contract and its slice of profit out of this particular state activity. We never hear it said by any Tory that too much state activity in this direction is "unhealthy", though it pervades the whole of our economy.

When it comes to the question of state subsidies, this "doling out of the taxpayers' money", mention of which is liable to drive any Tory audience to the verge of apoplexy, it is only the food subsidies (long since abolished), the housing subsidies and the like which come under fire. There are other kinds of state subsidies which are not merely tolerated; on the contrary the Tories are actively *for* state subsidies to farmers, they are *for* subsidies to a large number of private industries such as aircraft, steel, cotton, shipping. Some of these subsidies take the form of Government loans at specially low rates of interest. They all help to swell the dividends of the private shareholders. While *against* the financing of state retirement pensions

out of taxation, they are *for* subsidies by way of tax reliefs to private occupational pension schemes, the funds of which are used by insurance companies to finance profit-making activities. While *against* subsidising the tenants of council houses they are *for* subsidising the landlords of private houses by way of improvement grants. Side by side with denunciations about the heavy cost to the Exchequer of the National Health Service, there is actually a large body of opinion in the Tory Party which has been actively fighting *for* free drugs to private fee-paying patients. The excuse used for promoting this particular demand is that it helps to foster independent private practice in competition with the National Health Service (competition is always "healthy", remember).

It can be seen from all this that the high moral tone taken by Tories in their apparent desire to minimise state activity, state interference, state taxation and state subsidies is so much lying cant; so long as these activities are directed towards maintaining class privilege or giving a helping hand to profit-making private enterprise, it is all in order and there is nothing "unhealthy" about it.

Why is it that the most virulent propaganda on the question of subsidies has been directed towards the housing subsidies? These particular subsidies cost the Exchequer exactly 3½d. in every £ of expenditure. If the lot were abolished tomorrow the relief felt by the taxpayer would be imperceptible. The reason for the attack on the housing subsidies has little to do with the money involved; if that were the real issue, a cut of less than one-tenth in the annual arms bill would bring in a far bigger saving. The whole object of this attack is to limit the sphere of council house building so as to leave the way clear for private developers, private speculators, private landlords. Increase the sphere of council housing and you reduce the opportunity for private profit-making in this field.

Again when Tories talk about the "false sense of values" which has been created by some of our social services, they really mean that nobody ought to be shielded from the full impact of the profit-making system. They mean, for instance, that the price we should pay for housing should be conditioned by the profit which could be made in this sphere. Since we are living in the middle of a severe housing shortage, the profit which could be made by landlords and private developers if they were once given their head, with all rent controls abolished and council housing virtually stopped, would be out of this world. But to the Tory, the "real" cost includes such exorbitant profits, just as the "real" cost of the drug bill under the National Health Service includes the quite excessive profits made by the drug manufacturers. And those who want to be

protected from such gross profiteering have got a "false sense of values".

Services Outside Profit-making

There are, however, some social services which do not impinge in any immediate and direct sense on the activities of private enterprise one way or the other. For example, education, the hospital services, national insurance benefits and the like. What guides the Tories when it comes to services such as these?

Our social services have grown up as a result of varying pressures. To a large extent they represent concessions won from the ruling class by the working class; it is difficult to withdraw such concessions altogether without provoking major clashes or risking political defeat. Pre-eminent among such concessions was the establishment of the National Health Service, where initially the principle was laid down that every man, woman and child was entitled to the best medical treatment the country could afford, without payment and without a test of means, and without "contribution conditions". Working-class pressure has been the most important factor in establishing the social services, but there are others, too.

To some extent social services are necessary to the smooth running of any modern industrial state. The ruling class discovered in the nineteenth century that they could not let disease run rife without the risk of catching it themselves; minimum standards of sanitation were the answer. They discovered at the turn of the century that they could not raise sufficient recruits for the army from a population which was too much weakened by underfeeding; they had already found that to be useful wage slaves the workers must be able to read and write. By the mid-twentieth century the demands of contemporary capitalist society are tending to lead to something rather more sophisticated. Universal compulsory elementary education is not quite good enough for the modern capitalist machine; developments in further education and technical education are now demanded on all sides if industry is to get the technicians it requires, if British capitalists are not to lose ground to foreign competitors. For these and other reasons, the guiding line of the Tories in relation to social services is not a simple *reduction* in their size and scope. This is a much too simplified conception; there are, indeed, strong pressures upon them to *expand* the size and scope of some of them, and these pressures do not all come from the working-class movement.

Who Is To Pay?

The strategy of the Tories, therefore, is not so much to destroy the social services in the sense of abolishing them as to shift the burden of paying for

them on to the workers and on to those who use them. By and large, direct taxation, such as income tax, although it hits the worker also, taps the resources of "unearned increment"—i.e. rent interest and profit. The worker's weekly insurance contribution, on the other hand, does not tap these resources of the rich; neither do patients' payments for drugs under the National Health Service; nor would payments for education, school meals and the rest if the Tories were to try to introduce these. The intention is thus not to *reduce* state activity in these fields; the intention is to get these services paid for in other ways than through direct taxation. The intention may even be in some cases to increase the scope of the state service concerned; an extension of technical and university education, a bigger building programme for hospitals is not in theory incompatible with a drastic shift in the sources of payment for these services. That, at all events, is the stated intention of the Tory "theorists" on this matter; the excuse for Enoch Powell's higher contributions and new patients' charges under the National Health Service is that it will leave more money available for urgent hospital building; the argument for making parents pay for their children's schooling is always coupled with the assertion that it would leave more money for the development of higher education. We have to beware of such arguments and to realise that once a service is dependent on direct payments by the consumer or weekly contributions by the wage earner, whatever the arguments in theory, in practice this is the easiest way to confine, cramp and even cut the service concerned. Because what is spent on it begins to be geared not to what the country as a whole can afford but to what either the consumer or the contributor can afford. Have we not seen this happen over half a century in relation to pensions and national insurance benefits? Have not pensions been kept low for decades just because they are related to the weekly contribution that the lowest-paid wage earner can be expected to afford? And because every demand for a higher pension has been met with answers that it would mean *another* half-a-crown, or whatever it is, on the insurance card?

Moreover, payments by the consumer for his services are the easiest method of introducing class differentiation into them, of varying the quality according to the amount the consumer can afford. It is not difficult to foresee that if, for example, payments for schooling were once introduced, those who could afford to pay more than others would get a return in the shape of smaller classes, more individual tuition, etc., than the average. In the long run those with the long purse would get privileged treatment.

Meanwhile, we have to be clear on one thing; the Tories are not gunning for state activity as such. It

is possible to have a state-run service which is paid for entirely by the consumer which makes a profit, and is not a social service at all. A case in point is the Post Office. The Tories are not against such state-run services. They are simply against their being paid for out of rent, interest and profit. The line is, therefore, that only those who can prove poverty after a means test shall be entitled to state subsidies paid for out of direct taxation; and that, for the rest, as much as possible should be paid for out of the worker's wage packet.

The Means Test Argument

Tory arguments about state activity can be exposed as two-faced hypocrisy on the basis of the facts; Tory arguments about "values" can be shown up as the "values" of the profiteer. Once we understand the motive, these arguments fall easily into place. But what about the arguments that "primary poverty has disappeared", and "only those that need them should get them", and everyone who can afford to should be asked to pay for their own services? These arguments are more insidious and on the face of it more difficult to deal with; they have a certain superficial appeal beyond narrow Tory circles.

First of all then, on this question of poverty. It is quite true that working-class living standards have improved out of all recognition in the last fifty years. And it is quite true that nobody today falls down dead in the street from starvation; there is not a cluster of shoeless, ragged children begging at every street corner; outright savage visible destitution, as it existed in the nineteenth century, as, indeed, it exists today in large parts of Asia and Africa, is not apparent any more in the United Kingdom. Does this mean there is no poverty? On the contrary, poverty is a relative, not an absolute term. In comparison with the resources of this country, in comparison with its actual and potential wealth, there is poverty, one step higher than nineteenth-century destitution, maybe, but nevertheless poverty of the most sickening and intolerable description. Two-and-a-half million people today—one person in twenty—are living on national assistance. Let those who prate about "primary" poverty try living on 53s. 6d. a week plus rent, which is what living on national assistance means. And let those who talk of pride and self-respect suffer the humiliation of a means test before they can receive this pittance. National assistance is just enough to keep people off begging in streets, just enough to keep poverty invisible and allow the so-called "social scientists" and others to disguise the truth about poverty with talk about the "underprivileged".

Two-and-a-half million people on a means test is in fact an all-time record in numbers. But this is

not the only blot on our so-called prosperous horizon. There are at least 1,500,000 families living in overcrowded or insanitary houses. It should be noted that all this suffering exists precisely because of the inadequacy of our social services; national insurance benefits are not high enough; housing subsidies have been restricted and cut. Indeed, the poverty and degradation is to be found precisely among those sections of the population who are dependent on the social services. It is these services, among others, which are under attack.

Yes, there is poverty for the old, the sick and the helpless. There is, however, much less poverty for the wage-earner while he has the health and strength to work than there formerly was. This is not, of course, due to anything that the Tories have done; it is due to the hard bargain that the trade unions have been able to drive in a period of relatively full employment. These same trade unions which are sniped at week in and week out for their so-called anti-social attitude, for their "selfish", "narrow", "restrictive" attitude, for their persecution of that fine, proud, independent, upstanding individual who is prepared to stand up against union dictatorship—yes, well, the Tories would like, of course, to undermine and destroy trade unionism as we know it today, because with all its failures and weaknesses it has driven a hard bargain, and improved the standards of the average wage-earner out of all recognition. But to destroy trade unionism is obviously too difficult, so in default the Tories are now trying to get more back out of this wage packet which the unions have been able to enlarge. The new weekly contributions to be imposed this month will do something towards this; if payments were made for schooling and the rest it would do much more.

Back-Door Attack on Wages

This attack on social services is then an attack by the back door on a wage packet which it is more difficult to attack by the front door. Meanwhile, it is essential for the movement not to get sidetracked into discussions about what *individual* wage-earners can and cannot afford. Why is this? It has to be understood that under capitalism *every* wage-earner, whether he earns £10 or £25 a week, is being cheated; someone is making profits at his expense; he does not get the full fruits of his labour. Capitalism not only leads us into war, not only prevents the right things being produced, not only

fails to cater for the needs of the people, but at the same time steals from the producers some of the fruits of their labour. In such circumstances every social service paid for out of direct taxation gets back for the worker a little of that stolen fruit. What the Tories are now in effect saying is: "We have cheated you by taking something from you; now you must foot the bill for yourself out of what you have left".

It is here that right-wing social democracy has so often played straight into the hands of the capitalist class. For who is more wedded to the contributory system for pensions and national insurance benefits than the General Council of the T.U.C.? And who introduced the first charges under the National Health Service if it was not Mr. Gaitskell? And who has been keener to impose differential rent schemes on council tenants, thereby making one worker pay for another, than some Labour councillors? Unless this fundamental question of class relationships is understood, matters of principle get thrown overboard very easily.

These Tory arguments that it is "fair" that "those who can afford to" should pay, seek to play off one worker against another and undermine the solidarity that has won them victories in the past. But they do more than this; they are an attack on any kind of socialist philosophy. The ultimate socialist goal is "from everyone according to his ability; to everyone according to his needs". What does "to everyone according to his needs" mean in the context of socialism? It certainly does *not* mean that no one should get anything until they have undergone a means test. Nor does it mean universal differential rent schemes, though some Labour councillors seem to be under that impression. What this ultimate socialist goal really means is that as socialised production brings about greater and greater abundance, so an ever bigger proportion of what is produced will go automatically to those with special needs—to the old *because* they are old, to the young *because* they are young, to the sick *because* they are sick.

These Tory arguments that each man should pay for himself lead inevitably to the rat-race philosophy, the philosophy that teaches people not just to keep up with the Joneses, but to get to the top at the Joneses' expense. They are an attempt to undermine not just the solidarity which has won victories for the workers in the past, but the whole socialist outlook on which future victory depends.

“Essays in Seeing”

G. Burgher

IT might be argued that someone like myself, who moves through the realm of painting and sculpture with considerable hesitancy and expresses any opinion at all with a well-justified diffidence, was not the best choice to write an appreciation of John Berger's *Permanent Red*.¹ But that very disability may help to assure others, whom similar disqualifications may have deterred from venturing into the closed and jealously-guarded world of aesthetic criticism, that this book of “essays in seeing” throws open the doors to such a world and makes even the most timid of us feel at home there.

It is a familiar experience to come across a book or a film or a play which may, in terms of setting and characters, be completely strange to us and yet by virtue of an inner consistency of vision strike us, who would appear to be poorly equipped for judging, as thoroughly authentic. Something like that happens in reading this collection of essays. They were written at various times on a wide range of subjects, but one soon becomes aware that they are all informed with the same intelligent understanding of the way the pencil, brush or chisel of individual artists, in the very process of creating works of imagination, are also writing the history of our age—and never more so than when the artists themselves deny such a function or try to obscure the record.

In a brief introduction John Berger explains the principles of his approach to the task of sharing with us his own evaluations of contemporary artists and their works. The ideal critic would be able to take a broad enough view of art to characterise his own age in its long-term historical context and at the same time to identify himself with the artists of that period to estimate their results in terms of their professed intentions. The danger of the first of these perspectives is that it leads to an “over-mechanical” interpretation which distinguishes with difficulty the finer movements within the period and almost certainly misses the subtle signs of change preparing the way for the period to come. The danger of the second is that it becomes so subjective that scarcely any judgement at all can be made and the genius and the fool are equally objects of the critic's indiscriminating sympathy.

The two points of view, if they could be combined, ought to correct each other and provide the perfect equipment for valid critical appraisal. But within the present, and it is primarily in reference to contemporary works that we seek the critic's guidance,

the two points of view are mutually exclusive. No one, as Berger says, can be in one place, inside a particular artist's imagination, and simultaneously everywhere, in the whole stream of history. However quickly we go from one standpoint to the other, they remain distinct and unintegrated, because their integration would imply the spurious arrest of the dialectical process which constitutes the vitality of the present.

If art were timeless and eternal as the formalists contend, the problem would never arise. But it is not. “Great works survive their period, but that is not to say that they do not die. After their period they live again by virtue of a sort of resurrection. This after-life, however, is never the same intense, committed thing as their original life.” Or if the meaning of art consisted entirely in our individual responses to this work or that, there would be no problem—but there would be no criticism either.

We seem to be left with the frustrating alternatives of taking the historical view alone to be real and considering various works of art as just so many more or less successful attempts to realise the same static values, or of taking the works themselves in all their discrete particularity as the only reality and, by dispensing with any standard of values, of reducing judgement to a mere matter of personal preference. How is one to avoid a sterile and changeless idealism on the one hand and the meaningless flux of an irresponsible empiricism on the other?

The Purpose of Art

Berger solves this problem by demanding to know what *purpose* art can serve. Now if art is to serve any purpose at all, it must be related in some way to the human aspirations of which history is the record; but if those aspirations are really to be furthered by art, they cannot remain untouched and therefore unchanged by its actual achievements. Posing the question of art's purpose thus compels one to take both points of view seriously, and taking seriously two points of view which cannot at any one moment be combined has the effect of setting the critic himself in motion. He is able to interpret the artistic works of the age because he is moving in time with it; and by a kind of imaginative extrapolation of this movement he begins to see what his age is becoming and how it will look in retrospect.

And yet that is too vague a formulation to yield more than a very generalised humanism. In the attempt to assess the works of our own period it

¹ Published by Methuen & Co. Ltd.

begs too many questions. Berger therefore asks "does it help or encourage men to know and claim their social rights?" Since men only claim their social rights because other men are withholding them, this question amounts to a challenge that an artist, through his work, declare himself in respect to the class struggle. By issuing such a challenge Berger announces his own partisanship in that struggle and makes manifest the principles by which he distinguishes within our own period the significant from the trivial, the work of real promise from that which is merely mannered or even definitely hostile to the progressive movement of the age. This frank confession of the basis of judgement is bound to be castigated by non-Marxist critics as doctrinaire. But when one's own society or the world at large is divided by class differences, one is forced to take a stand on one side or the other: refusing to commit oneself openly is to support surreptitiously the *status quo* with whatever that entails in terms of current injustices. Those who deplore the act of critical commitment would seem to be contending that social division is a result of ideological differences instead of being a real antagonism in the relations of production which ideological differences reflect.

But even granting the validity of Berger's challenge as far as our own time is concerned, how could it be applied to the art of the past when social issues were not so nakedly presented or took an entirely different form? "It is essential to remember," he reminds us, "that the specific meaning of a work of art changes—if it didn't, no work could outlive its period, and no agnostic could appreciate a Bellini. . . . It is the lives lived during the last fifty years that have now turned Michelangelo into a revolutionary artist."

And it is not merely a question of reinterpreting an older work of art in the light of criteria fixed for us by our own social circumstances. The work may come to meet us part of the way because the artist, if he were truly great, probably built better than he knew. This is the point George Lukacs has made in showing how the implications of masterpieces like *War and Peace* or the *Comédie Humaine* might go beyond the social views their authors consciously held. However, there is a statute of limitations on the application of this principle. It can salvage a good deal of Dostoevsky but Pasternak is too late in time to benefit from its operation. The same is true of painting and Berger thinks the critical date was about 1920. "Because after 1920 it was no longer possible to consider yourself a revolutionary without committing yourself politically." As Lenin suggests in his *Report on War and Peace*, each successive social transformation is a more definite break with the past than the one before and the transition from capitalism to socialism is the most crucial of all. It is fought out in the most uncompromising terms and

spares no one from the responsibility of deciding what side he is on.

The attempt to shirk this responsibility may take various forms. "The difference between the old (Royal) Academy and the New Academy of Formalism is that the Old Academy avoids facing up to what is happening in the world by naively imposing outdated conventions upon it; whilst the New, more sophisticated, Academy contracts out more subtly by claiming to create a world beyond the actual one: a world of subjective projections and abstractions. They are both academic in the fully derogatory sense of the word because both, cut off from any direct continuous exploration of reality, inevitably degenerate into tricks and formulae to deceive their public."

Of course this does not represent on Berger's part a concession to popular prejudices against abstract art. "No student of twentieth-century European culture can reasonably deny that certain abstract artists have contributed to the development of painting, sculpture and architecture"; and what he has to say about Cubism as a formula for interpreting and understanding reality by suggesting the range of possibilities open to the artist's vision is most enlightening, linking as it does the scientific discoveries which were beginning to give man the possibility of controlling his environment with the artistic realisation of man's capacity for living unalienated from nature. No, it is not "a question of all abstract art being fundamentally opposed to figurative art. . . . The division now is between those artists who have a sense of responsibility and those who have not; or, to put it another way, between those artists whose view of life can sustain a minimum faith in the value of human exchange, and those whom alienation has made pathological."

Looking at the World

Naturally, when John Berger states that the question he asks of each work of art is whether it encourages men to know and claim their social rights, he does not mean that art must take the form of direct propaganda. A painting is not expected to portray graphically this or that aspect of the social struggle. How then does the work of art respond to his critical catechism? He points out that when we have viewed a picture, say, which has moved us, we carry away something we did not have before, something more profound than the recollected image of the incident depicted; and that something is a "memory of the artist's way of looking at the world". Now a way of looking at the world implies a relationship with the world, and every relationship implies action. The action implied is conveyed to us by the kind of potentiality for change inherent in a particular artist's way of looking at the world. "A valid work

of art promises in some way or another the possibility of an increase, an improvement"; and in the context of our own age this promise is inevitably bound up with the proletarian struggle for equality and peace.

Generally speaking, Berger believes that there are two broad categories of works, each holding out to us a different kind of promise. "There are works which embody a way of looking that promises the mastering of reality—Piero, Mantegna, Poussin, Degas. Each of these suggests in a different way that space, time and movement are understandable and controllable. Life is only as chaotic as men make it or allow it to be. There are other works which embody a way of looking whose promise lies not so much in any suggested mastery, but rather in the fervour of an implied desire for change—El Greco, Rembrandt, Watteau, Delacroix, Van Gogh. These artists suggest that men in one way or another are larger than their circumstances—and so could change them. The two categories are related, perhaps, to the old distinction between classic and romantic, but they are broader because they are not concerned with specific historical vocabularies."

It can be seen that the first of these categories, with its emphasis on "handling" reality through a knowledge of perspective, an understanding of the play of light, the careful dispositions of forms, is more closely associated with science. The second, with its suggestion of man's rising superior to his situation, of his being hardly contained by an older formal structure and requiring new modes of expression to project an inner striving is related to the idea of revolutionary change. As complementary ways of looking at the world they represent an artistic equivalent of scientific socialism—the conscious employment of objective laws to bring about radical social changes.

This distinction seems a fruitful one which may well have a wider application than has been given it in this collection of essays. Perhaps as Marxists we ought to reconsider the literature of the bourgeois period from the same point of view. It is possible that formal skills and innovations in the handling of concepts may qualify as worth our attention certain works which we have neglected on the basis of content alone. Usually revolutions in technique have represented a need for new ways of expressing ideas that were themselves novel, even if the contradictions within bourgeois society prevented the proper utilisation of such literary devices and subsequently degraded them into mere tricks. Parallel with the development of Cubism as a graphic reflection of the scientific discovery that the observer could not stand outside the world observed, there have been various literary experiments in showing how the author thinks about the things he is writing about.

Some of these experiments could repay study, since the artist, in taking himself as part of his subject matter, need not be guilty of a perverted egocentricity but may only be considering "the functioning of his own (mind) and senses as an integral part of nature". This is not to be taken as advocating a revisionist attitude toward the literature of the recent past but only as a plea for the useful employment of any technical advances that can enrich socialist realism.

New Modes of Expression

Towards the end of the book Berger makes a very important comment on this question of new modes of expression which failed to find themes worthy of their employment. "Many of the artists shrank back from the political implications of the demands made by the new art they had created. Others were daunted—understandably enough—by the barriers, created by centuries of bourgeois culture, between modern art and the class that alone could bring about a modern state: the working class. But there were—and are—other places in the world where these contradictions are less. And so it seems possible (and, incidentally, in accord with the effects of imperialism on the imperialist countries themselves) that just as capitalist Europe nurtured the idea of a socialism it has not yet been able to achieve itself, it has also created a modern art that it has not yet been able to develop."

It is interesting to speculate, in a kind of up-dated version of Lessing, on the way various branches of the arts compare with each other in this matter of coming to terms with the progressive movements of the age. When one remembers the degree of commitment of French painters during the last century and recalls in our own times such artists as Léger, Picasso, Siqueiros and many others, one may come to the conclusion that painting has a better record in this respect than writing. After all, looking at the world is a more direct experience of it than thinking about it; and certainly in this period of general decadence the earliest signs of social malaise have often appeared in the exhibited works of some group of painters. Language is a more conservative medium than coloured shapes or plastic forms and is less likely to mirror so sensitively the changing moods of a society. Also, of course, it is easier to pretend to have the kind of thoughts that are considered "safe" than to lie to ourselves about our real feelings. But probably a more important ground of differentiation is to be found in the way a painter or sculptor actually works. In manipulating paint or clay, in handling the materials of various physical processes he must acquire dexterities which give him something in common with manual workers; and, indeed, these arts have often recruited their

practitioners from the ranks of workers and peasants. This immediate contact with an objective world is some assurance against the idealistic perversions to which the writer is more susceptible.

In any case, Berger can give us a description of an international exhibition like the Venice Biennale, which helps us to see how contemporary painters and sculptors are inadvertently telling us almost everything we need to know about the world today. "In this exhibition one can read the political future of the world; it may lack masterpieces but it is full of unconscious revelations and portents." Along with thousands of works from the U.S.A., Germany Italy, Holland and France which reveal "the forms of decay and the dirt of putrefaction" are to be found paintings and sculpture, mainly from newly-independent countries like India or the United Arab Republic, which "remind us that art itself is independent to exactly the same degree as it discloses reality". There is the Soviet pavilion which by comparison with the entries from America and Western Europe is "rich and various and ingenious". It includes what Berger describes as "old-style Stalinist works" and the richness may be literary and even sentimental; "but if one has to choose between the unimaginativeness of bureaucrats and the fantasies of the sick. . . ." There is no doubt about Berger's choice; but many of us would disagree with his characterisation of Soviet art as bureaucratic. The very sickness of late bourgeois art which Berger diagnoses so brilliantly ought to suggest that artists may well require the helpful guidance and constructive criticism of others in the task of developing a healthy socialist culture. The artist must cease to think of himself as the sole, individualistic arbiter of the value of what he does if his work is to answer Berger's socially-significant question in the fullest possible way.

Alienation of the Artist

In describing the decadent works of this exhibition Berger speaks of them as having one image in common: "the image of muck, of garbage . . . some canvases have open holes torn in them, others have gauze stuffed into their gashes, others are overlaid with cement, others consist of nothing but one thick coating of the same colour which has been artificially made to crack and peel. . . . They are not objects that have been made, they are objects that have been used—like cigarette butts, broken bottles. . . ." Again, in mentioning the example of an English sculptor, Berger remarks on how his talent has been subjected to his compulsion to turn out gimmicks. The idea of the alienation of the artist runs through all these essays and shows how the fate of the individual in bourgeois society,

as Marx described it in his 1844 manuscript, has now caught up with those who were the least completely integrated members of such a society. Alienation is a consequence of commodity exchange and it comes increasingly to characterise the artist as his works are drawn more and more into the category of products which change hands in the market place. In so far as creations of the imagination are not freely-reproducible like manufactured articles they have usually been exchanged in a different way—either becoming the property of a patron in return for the artist's support or, later, being sold by auction. This was because they could not be assigned a fixed price on the basis of incorporated labour-power. But with the greater pervasion of exchange relations this distinction has been weakened, and the artist, like any other worker, has had the experience of seeing the product of his own effort transformed into an alien object standing over against him. He, too, has come under the influence of advertising, salesmanship and the compulsion to produce a slick, marketable article. Not only has his work been turned into a commodity, but even his way of performing his work has been exploited as saleable. Berger points out that this is just what has happened to the painter John Bratby; and, of course, it implies that ultimately the artist himself becomes a mere commodity, to be hawked around private showings and—if he is lucky from one point of view, unlucky from another—to be bought up by the mass media and vulgarised for popular consumption. Berger has no illusions about how deep the corruption of taste goes in a society like ours. "The readers of the *News of the World* are not Candides." But he also realises that "in a disintegrating culture the sophisticated attitude is the most likely to act as a catalyst to further disintegration."

In his penetrating analysis of the difficulty of being an artist in these times John Berger's voice often has for me the ring of Christopher Caudwell's when that imaginative Marxist writer was dealing with the problems of poets in a dying culture. I cannot think of any stronger recommendation for this book of essays. It has not been possible in a review article to show in detail how Berger's principles of criticism function in assessing the value of a number of individual artists. Over and over again I was agreeably startled by the amount of light he was able to throw on the works of contemporary painters and sculptors; and that is the true test of his own methods of appraisal. I even, occasionally, enjoyed the very pleasant sensation of having certain vague personal intimations confirmed by the knowledgeable judgements of one who has firmly established himself as the best guide we have in this particular field.

Sartre and Marxism

John Lewis

SOME years ago Sartre was only considered by many people to be the originator of a decadent bourgeois movement known as existentialism. This became wildly fashionable, especially in Paris, and the Café Flore in St. Germain became a meeting place for Sartre and the left-wing intellectuals.

The craze has died away but Sartre remains—indeed Sartre has gone on, writing new plays, plunging more deeply into politics, and exerting a growing influence through his journal *Les Temps Modernes* with its monthly circulation of 10,000 copies.

Recently Sartre has been in the news not only as one of the signatories of the Declaration of the intellectuals on the Algerian war, but for the press conference at which he challenged the Government to arrest him. This is not the first time that Sartre has declared himself as an opponent of the Establishment. In 1954 he made a striking statement at the World Council of Peace, meeting in Vienna, on the atom bomb. In it he drew the distinction between a people's army which fights only for peace and the use of the atom bomb enabling the leaders of the West to make war without the people. It is, he said, a weapon suitable for oppressive minorities. The atom bomb is a weapon against history: "In order to stop the world turning round they are threatening to suppress history by liquidating those who make history. It is all they can do: wipe out man in case he changes."

An Open Letter to Sartre

But Sartre, though he is usually on the workers' side in every great political crisis, though he has seriously grappled with Marx, is not a Marxist. From time to time he comes into open conflict either in matters of theory or on political events. He condemned the Soviet action in Hungary, and he has recently published a work on philosophy, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, which on certain essential issues is in contradiction to Dialectical Materialism. Roger Garaudy, a leading French Marxist, a Deputy, an able philosopher and a brilliant controversialist has written a searching criticism of Sartre's book entitled *Questions to Jean-Paul Sartre, preceded by an Open Letter*.¹

Perhaps the Open Letter is as significant as the criticism. The French Party does not compromise with left-wing intellectuals and does not mince words when they talk nonsense. The cordial tone of the

Open Letter is, therefore, to be specially noted. Commencing the letter with the words *Cher Ami*, Garaudy mentions the many causes in which Sartre and the Party have been on the same side, especially their common opposition to colonialism. (It is also true that Sartre was almost the only leading French intellectual to attack the Suez expedition.) Garaudy takes him to task, however, for his inability to maintain the faith he had in the people of France, which he held in the days of the Resistance. Are there not wide sections of opinion, not on the left politically, who are opposed to the Algerian war? Can he not see that the revolutionary movement is entering the positive and constructive phase?

Two Positive Contributions

Garaudy, however, pays tribute to two contributions which Sartre has made which are in line with Marxist thought. Firstly, in his theory of intentionality he shows that the world only reveals its significance to man through the intentions which he had upon it. It is only when man looks at society with a view to changing it that he can hope to understand how it works. It is when man decides to change society that his revolutionary project enables him to understand it.

Secondly, Sartre tries to show, in a long piece he has written on Flaubert, how the individual is essentially a member of his class through his membership of the family. The child is thus from the first conditioned by class pressures because he grows up in a family which is, as a family, conditioned by its class position. Thus the contradictions which arise in the conduct, in the mind, of the individual as a child reflect the objective contradictions in the social situation. The individual is thus explained by the social and not, as Freud and Jung and many more would have it, the social determined by the individual.

Freud had attributed all the distortions of the individual character, all human aggression and rebellion, and all the social consequences of these distortions, to infantile experiences, especially those associated with the family and with sexual life.

Sartre and Political Humbug

Sartre has also thrown considerable light on the basic insincerities of politics and indeed of human conduct. Both in his novels, his plays and his philosophy one of his main themes is what he calls "bad faith". Here he has carried his analysis of human motives and the humbug and self-deception

¹ Collection Clarté (Paris).

involved in them farther than most Marxists. Moreover, he has worked out his theory in relation to the contemporary political situation in a most revealing way.

For instance, in his play *Crime Passionnel* Hugo, the fanatical Party zealot, is sent to assassinate the Party leader Hoederer who has established a united front with the Royalists and Liberals against the Germans. This is held to be a betrayal of revolutionary principle, just as the Trotskyist P.O.U.M. fought against communist participation in the united Spanish front against Franco. Like all intellectuals in revolutionary politics, Hugo is dissatisfied with his role and wants to do something really important. He comes to politics with what is in fact a completely selfish approach. He demands a pure revolutionary creed which will satisfy his idealism and free him from perpetual self-criticism. He wants tasks that will satisfy his desire for perfection. In the play Hugo says: "I entered the Party because its cause is just and I shall leave it when it ceases to be so. As for men, it is not what they are which interests me but what they can become." To this Hoederer replies "And I love them for what they are. . . . You detest men because you detest yourself; your purity is like death, and the revolution you dream of isn't ours: You don't want to change the world, you want to blow it up." Hugo loves principles and not men, he is a murderer not a revolutionary. Denouncing Hoederer for sully the purity of revolutionary principles, of moving to power by compromise, Hugo accuses him of *Les Mains Sales* [Dirty Hands—the title of the play]. Hoederer replies that political action demands that one should be prepared to get one's hands "dirty"—especially if by doing so one can save thousands of lives.

Sartre has a profound contempt not only for ultra-leftists, but for the ex-Communists in their glissade from revolution to counter-revolution. In his analysis of the "four stages" through which they go after leaving the Party he describes their progress thus:

1. The Party is wrong, but you can't go against the workers.
2. I still love the working class, but, aren't they stupid?
3. The communists no longer interest me because they tolerate Soviet prison camps.
4. Let's bomb Moscow.

Is Knowledge Completely Relative?

Garaudy does not, however, pull his punches when it comes to Sartre's blunders, which are serious. Sartre argues that *all* knowledge is highly subjective; that we know exclusively in our human categories, almost as an artist *creates* out of his material what he wants to have. Now this leaves objective, scientific

knowledge completely out of account, so that Sartre has a dualism on his hands; two totally different forms of knowledge—total idealism in human knowledge, and total agnosticism in the sciences. In opposition to this dualism Marxism knows perfectly well how to accept the relativity of knowledge without getting bogged down in subjectivism. Whatever we know is partial, is limited by the point of view, but it is, nevertheless, a genuine part of objective reality. Any philosophy which teaches that there are two roads to truth is heading straight for pure agnosticism or for pure superstition—or both.

Dialectics as a Law of Nature or a Law of Thought?

A very curious mistake, which shows how easy it is for even someone as generally sympathetic to communist policy as Sartre to be completely muddled on questions of theory, is his sincere belief that nature has had a dialectical process imposed upon it by Marxist theory, although in itself it is not dialectical. Dialectics, says Sartre, belongs only to man and not to nature at all.

Marxism strongly disagrees. Nature is dialectical in its own nature, and we think dialectically about it because the mind discovers and follows the motion and changes of an independent reality which is itself ever changing and itself moved by the interpenetration and conflict of opposites. As Garaudy points out, if Sartre were really conversant with modern science he would realise the truth of this.

Sartre seems to think that this recognition of an objective world, driven by its own laws, which man has to accept and obey, subordinates the human to the non-human, man to nature, and destroys our liberty. Engels long ago refuted this notion (why is it that these clever fellows will not take the trouble to read the men they criticise? Have they no humility? Must they always *assume* that they know what Marx and Engels said without bothering to find out what they did in fact say?) It has been pointed out times without number that *knowledge* of scientific law is the exact opposite of being passively acted upon by laws of which we are ignorant. If we know them, we freely achieve our objects by obeying them. That is both simple everyday experience, and at the same time exactly what a Marxist means by dialectics. It is only very clever men who cannot understand something so transparently simple.

Sartre, like all individualists, thinks that the acceptance of law, either in nature or social development, implies the loss of freedom. Liberty, he imagines, dwells in some sphere of its own, mysteriously existing in the granite of scientific causality.

Are Men Naturally Antagonistic?

This individualistic attitude is reflected when he

considers man and society. Here, too, he is afraid of man losing his freedom, his independent personality, if he works co-operatively with others for the common good, or links himself with others in a common cause. Even worse, he finds it difficult not to envisage people as necessarily, and by their very nature, antagonistic to one another. Marxism, on the other hand, draws a sharp contrast between those contradictions in a healthy society which are capable of being overcome by reasonable adjustments (note we do not say that they may *easily* be overcome), and the antagonistic contradictions of a class society in which the interests of the opposing classes are inherently irreconcilable, so that it is impossible to overcome them. It is only in these conditions that the subordination of man to social requirements is destructive of human personality.

Sartre and the Political Struggle

When Sartre discusses the contemporary political struggle not only does he carry over his individualism into this field but he falls victim to the vice of abstractionism, regarding "human nature", "force", "struggle", etc., as if these were always the same and could be estimated in themselves, out of relation to the circumstances in which they appear.

So he sees the revolutionary struggle as little more than an aggregation of individual acts of rebellion and not an organised movement of the working class guided by social theory. For Sartre there is no working class, no class struggle, no history (except a record of facts) and no science of history (as is shown even by his remarks on the French Revolution of 1789). He interprets all events as flowing from the peculiar relations and interactions that one finds in all men as individuals, in all ages in all circumstances—a highly sophisticated version of the view that "human nature is always the same" and is responsible for everything. Therefore, in his abstract way, when he sees "force" it is just force, whether it is Hitler smashing democracy, or democracy freeing itself from the tyranny of fascism. But "force" cannot be abstracted from the conditions under which it is found. Force exercised *by whom, against whom* and for *what*? And if he regards "force" as evil, while "liberty" is good; once again we criticise the abstract approach. What sort of liberty? Liberty for the settlers in the White Highlands of Kenya, which negates the liberty of a million Africans to cultivate fertile land; or liberty for the Africans and curtailment of White privileges?

Cordialement

This is by no means the last word about Jean-Paul Sartre, or Garaudy would not conclude his Open Letter with the expression *Cordialement*. That is not how one writes to inveterate enemies.

When we turn to his journal *Les Temps Modernes* one sees a man who is better than his theory (all the more reason for trenchantly criticising the theory). He has no illusions about the international situation. The Cold War is entirely the result of Western anti-communism. "Russia wants peace," he declares, "and proves it every day. However hard I look, I find in the last thirty years no aggressive ambitions on the part of the Russians."

He is particularly interested in the role of the Party. The Party has canalised the aspirations of a whole oppressed class. It is the communist form of socialism which alone represents hope for mankind. Therefore we cannot do without the Party. Its disappearance could only bring about the disintegration of the working class as a political body, for without the Party the workers are nothing.

While he is deeply concerned at the exposure of Stalin's errors at the Twentieth Congress he declares that what happened was "a *détour* imposed by the force of circumstances".

With far more good sense than was to be found in many intellectuals on the question of Hungary, while he opposed the Soviet action he asserted that the Western Governments had lost all moral right to protest against the events in Budapest, for the Americans had launched the great radio campaign and the infiltration of agents which incited the Hungarians to rebellion, although they had no intention of supporting them. (Surely he should have said that whatever such intentions, they faded away when the Russians appeared. Would they have done so otherwise?)

Seeing clearly enough the need for a socialist ideology he equates the cause of truth with that of the rising class. Each great philosophy had been, in turn, the way in which a rising class became conscious of itself. But if rationalism was the creed of the rising bourgeoisie, it is not, in that form, a progressive ideology today. In our own day Marxism is the philosophy which represents the proletariat—"the class that holds the future in its hands" (Marx). Marxism is today "by itself the whole of culture, for it alone enables us to understand men, works and events".

These convictions we, as well as Roger Garaudy, can welcome "*Cordialement*".

Our Morals and Lady C

Arnold Kettle

THE jury's verdict in the *Lady Chatterley* case was widely welcomed as a defeat for ruling-class hypocrisy and philistinism.

It would take a Bernard Shaw to do justice to the comic potentialities of the situation. He, who was so conscious of the economic base, would certainly not have ignored the fact that a great deal of money as well as morality was at stake. Then there is the picture of the nine men and three women locked in the jury-room reading away at Lawrence's novel to discover whether it was likely to corrupt us—and presumably them. The comforts of the jury-room were, we are assured, augmented for the occasion. How? By the provision of a dictionary? A copy of the game laws? A chaise-longue? But the point here was that to have the jury read the book *as a whole* was indeed something new; before the Obscene Publications Act of 1959 the consideration of the jury could be directed simply to specific passages, taken out of context. There can be no doubt that one of the reasons for the jury's verdict in this case was this new provision, and this is a most important principle in any consideration of the laws of obscenity.

Another, perhaps more dubious, new feature of the case was the appearance of expert witnesses, testifying as to the "literary merit" of Lawrence's novel. These witnesses forced their way in, so to speak, on the basis of the new Act which laid down that although a book might indeed be "such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons likely to read it" there must be no conviction and no order of forfeiture

"if it is proved that the publication of the article in question is justified as being for the public good on the ground that it is in the interests of science, literature, art, or learning, or of other objects of general concern."

There is not much doubt that these two changes in the law were technically responsible for the acquittal of Penguin Books Ltd. In the first place, by insisting on the total effect of the book, the Defence was able to expose the Crown's, i.e., Mr. Griffith-Jones's, descriptions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as ludicrously inadequate and quite misleading. In the second place the Defence was able to produce a formidable array of "experts" who—in whatever else they may have disagreed and despite the incapacity to combine comprehensibility with expertise—were unanimous in testifying with obvious sincerity, not to say passion, as to the "literary value" of the novel. Since no-one knows what "literary

value" in fact is the unanimity can equally justifiably be regarded as astonishing or inevitable.

Report of the Trial

The publication by Penguins of a near-verbatim report of the trial¹ edited very tellingly by C. H. Rolph, will probably confirm the suspicions of many people that Regina, in this particular aspect of her duties, was not really trying.

For one thing, why no Prosecution witnesses? It is impossible to believe that *no-one* was prepared to go into the witness-box on behalf of the Crown. Surely Mr. Griffith-Jones might have produced an archbishop to trump the Defence's bishop? Might not Mr. T. S. Eliot have been persuaded that an appearance on such an occasion would have been consistent with his declared views as traditionalist, royalist, and Anglo-Catholic and his expressed dismay at Lawrence's lack of "education"? And might not Mr. Charles Curran, M.P., never backward in the defence of philistinism, have managed to persuade the Court that he was as much of an expert as Mr. Roy Jenkins? Presumably the Prosecution must have felt that against the claim to be a literary expert there can be no effective answer.

The other main reason for doubting the Prosecution's genuine desire to obtain a conviction is the almost inconceivable stupidity of some of Mr. Griffith-Jones's lines of attack. The now famous question "Is it a book you would wish your wife or servant to read?" (C. H. Rolph describes it as having "a visible—and risible—effect on the jury") was, as has been well said, scarcely calculated to impress a tired member of the jury as he hurried home to help wash up the supper things. Nor was this the only evidence of the Prosecution's clear class-bias. References to the inappropriateness of such a book being available for 3s. 6d., which brought it within the reach of (oh, horror!) *factory girls*, also formed part of Mr. Griffith-Jones's case.

Then there was the doubt, which must have passed more than once through the minds of the jury as they compared the Prosecution's description of Lawrence's novel with the book they had been reading in the jury-room, as to whether Mr. Griffith-Jones had actually *read Lady Chatterley's Lover*, apart from the "purple passages", or, if he had, whether he had ever read anything else. To describe those areas of the book in which Connie and Mellors are not making love as "padding" is scarcely

¹ *The Trial of Lady Chatterley* (3s. 6d.).

consistent with an objective description of the book even seen from the most hostile viewpoint. As for the claim that Lawrence puts "adultery on a pedestal", one might equally well suggest that if Constance Chatterley had not taken a lover Lawrence would have been putting impotence on a pedestal. The truth is, of course, that the novel is no more about adultery as such than about gamekeepers as such.

Despite these manifest inadequacies and incompetencies which in effect destroyed what case the Crown might have made for the banning of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, it seems on the whole probable that the Prosecution was doing its best. The main point is that Mr. Griffith-Jones's arguments were in essence those which in previous cases of this kind had been good enough to secure a conviction. Even the good old argument about wives and servants has in fact done yeoman service in its day. The only trouble, from the Crown's point of view, was that that day is now yesterday.

Another factor which undoubtedly undermined the Prosecution's case is that everyone knows very well that truly degrading and pornographic books are to be found on any station bookstall (often with illustrated covers which make them look even worse than they are, thus adding fraud to the publisher's other crimes) and no-one prosecutes the publishers. To make a test-case of Penguins, one of the few publishing firms with genuinely high standards and an excellent record of publication of the best literature of the past as well as present, and of D. H. Lawrence, a writer whose passionate sincerity stands out a mile whatever one's ultimate judgment of his work, was, to put it mildly, to choose a curious wicket to bat on. Yet again, before one accuses Mr. Griffith-Jones of some kind of (no doubt Freudian) unconscious connivance with the Defence, it has to be remembered that *Lady Chatterley* is indeed from a literalist point of view an extreme case. It *does* describe sexual intercourse with a detail no other non-technical book has attempted, and it does use those words.

The fact that Lawrence's novel is about as aseptic and non-aphrodisiac a work as in the circumstances, and granted the author's talent for communication, can well be conceived, seems to have escaped the notice of the Crown. Of course this is not to say that no-one may or will get a cheap thrill out of it. Almost any book *can* be used as pornography by those who are after pornography, and after all the rumpus it is inevitable that there will be a good deal of this kind of thing around *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. One can only point out that an effective Index of works which *can* be used for pornographic purposes would have to begin with the Bible.

The Establishment has in fact never shown any

great interest in the stamping-out of pornography except of the very crudest kind. Over-stimulation of sexual impulses and the commercial exploitation of sex have become, as we all know, accepted parts of the advertising and entertainment businesses of capitalist society. And the general assumption, seldom openly expressed, has long been that if you have the money you can get anything including *Lady Chatterley* on your continental holiday.

Sex or Class?

I think it could be effectively argued that the ruling-class case against Lawrence's novel has more to do with class than with sex. During a recent visit to the Soviet Union I talked with some older Soviet writers who had read the novel in the thirties, using Gorky's copy, which bore his marginal comments. I asked what the nature of the comments had been. "He regarded the book as one of the greatest exposures of bourgeois society to date", they said. And this was certainly as Lawrence intended. The underlying motif of the novel is the rottenness and impotence of the British ruling class and the hope of a better, more humane way of living and feeling embodied in the working class. This intention is clear enough in the now-published version of the book; it was even clearer in the first of the three drafts, published in the forties with Frieda Lawrence's blessing as *The First Lady Chatterley*. Here the political implications of the story are underlined. The gamekeeper is much more politically-conscious and actually goes off to work in a factory and becomes the secretary of the Communist Party branch.

Lawrence changed the emphasis of the novel in the final draft because he thought a thorough-going "burning-out" of the sexual issue would have more effect on his readers. Subsequent history has shown that, in the relatively short run, he was probably, from his point of view, quite right. But he never believed, or wanted anyone to think, that the sexual issue could be isolated or separated from the broader social one. "I think societal instinct much deeper than the sex instinct," he wrote, "and societal repression much more devastating." What Constance Chatterley learns from Mellors is not sexual technique but "warm-heartedness". This is the crux of the book. The "frankness", the use of the four-letter words, is a necessary part of the conveying of Connie's changing consciousness. The getting rid not only of false shame but of sentimental and bogus approaches to human relationships, these are essential aspects of her advance to a more satisfactory and happier view of life.

The presentation of Mellors is often considered the weakness of the novel. I cannot agree with this view. It is true that Lawrence puts rather more of himself into Mellors than a fully objective realisation

of the character would permit; and it is true, too, that by making the gamekeeper both a worker (wage-earner, son of a miner) and one who can pass as a "gentleman" (he has been an officer in the army) Lawrence lays himself open to the charge of trying to have it both ways. But I do not think these points are really very important. Mellors, it seems to me, is, in literary terms, a legitimate descendant of Hardy's Jude and Tressell's Owen, and, in the profoundest sense, a genuine working-class "type" of the 1920's: to complain that he is not a "pure" worker seems to me idealistic nonsense. The important thing about him is that he is very deeply class-conscious, even though he may not have a very clear idea of the "way forward".

Marxists, of course, are bound to feel that, in shifting the emphasis of his novel from the politico/social to the socio/sexual, Lawrence was making a mistake and even, to some extent, playing into the hands of the ruling class he hated. For the implication of the shift is that modes of feeling (including attitudes to sex) are more fundamental than the social relationships that give rise to them and that the way to change the world is by first changing men's feelings. And this implication plays into the hands of the ruling class, as all idealist formulations do, by shifting the attention of aspiring people away from political action to a concentration on an attempt to achieve better personal relationships within a relatively *private* context. All this is perfectly true and there can be no doubt that the influence of D. H. Lawrence has tended, despite his own insistence on his "societal" emphasis, to encourage an

inward-turned, "psychological", and even "search for the soul-mate" direction of exploration rather than a disposition to tackle the underlying social issues.

Real Problems

But I do not think this is by any means the whole story, especially as far as *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is concerned. It is quite true that in a socialist society people's attitudes to sexual matters are likely to be very different from those current in bourgeois society and that, in particular, sex comes to be seen in quite a different perspective. But the fact remains that in our society at the present time sexual relationships and ethics do constitute very real problems which can neither be laughed off nor wished away. It is therefore important that progressive people should distinguish between treatments of sexual matters which are prurient, unhelpful and positively harmful, and those which, though perhaps unsatisfactory and even dangerous in some of their emphases, are honest and essentially humane. I do not think that the publication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is going to further decisively the cause of the socialist revolution, and I am sure that the "trial" has revealed the hopeless inadequacy of our laws for dealing with the *real* problems of pornography in our society. But it seems to me proper for the Marxist to point out the many deeply true and progressive aspects of Lawrence's novel and certainly to avoid the mistake of lumping it with the commercial junk which constitutes a real moral threat to contemporary values. And I for one would be prepared to propose two cheers for that Old Bailey jury.

Long-Range Planning to Raise Living Standards

In the period of the comprehensive building of Communism in the Soviet Union many new problems are being posed. Among them is how to determine the level of production of consumer goods and services which will meet the requirements of "abundance" for the people. An article by P. Krylov in "Planovoye Khozyaistvo" (No. 8, 1960) discusses this problem; the main points are given below.

THE Soviet Union has already surpassed the most highly developed capitalist countries in some aspects of the standard of living—higher and secondary education, medical services and social maintenance. Tasks already set for the period up to 1965 will surpass these capitalist countries also in production per head of a number of important foodstuffs, and will closely approach the U.S.A. level for per head production of fabrics and footwear. Housing, too, is forging ahead; taxation is being abolished, and

further reductions in working hours are planned to begin with 1964, towards a thirty-five- and thirty-hour week.

The Soviet Government is assigning increasing sums to develop those branches of industry which are directly connected with satisfying the needs of the population. It is necessary to work out the material needs on a rational basis, for long-range planning of production. What are the "reasonable needs" of which Khrushchov spoke at the 21st Congress of the C.P.S.U.? How are we to deter-

mine the consumption of the basic material values needed to ensure the harmonious physical and spiritual development of man?

The aim is not only to determine the amount of requirements of the population and also how the total is composed, but to take into account changes that will take place in the consumption of the people, since a number of new needs will appear and some that now exist will gradually die out.

What is especially important is that the consumption quotas must be based on the social conditions of man under the socialist system and the gradual transition to communist principles of distribution. The rational consumption quotas must provide for a more progressive composition than in the most highly developed capitalist countries, since the actual consumption in capitalist countries reflects the social contradictions.

Various Soviet organisations have been working out rational quotas of consumption of food products and some manufactured goods, as well as various kinds of communal and other services. The food quotas have to be drawn up according to the age groups of the population, bearing in mind also the various types of work—physical work of different kinds and mental work.

Rational Food Quotas

The rational food quotas for the Soviet population—which the 1965 consumption will, in the main, approach—provide for a higher level of consumption than in the U.S.A. of such foods as milk and dairy products, fish and fish products, fruit and vegetables. The share of animal products in the total calorific value will rise to 29 per cent compared with 20 per cent in 1958, and the share of bread and potatoes will drop from 62 per cent to 46 per cent. In other cases, especially fruit, a longer period will be necessary to reach the estimated quotas.

One important question in solving the problem of rational food requirements is that of bringing the levels of consumption of the most important food products by the population of the towns and the countryside closer to one another; the same applies to the various regions of the country. Of course there will be certain differences in the composition of the food of the population according to regions also in the future, owing to different economic conditions and established traditions of consumption in the various areas.

All of these factors have to be taken into account with a view to combining the best possible physiological composition of the food with an assortment of the different foods which are produced in the particular economic area.

Quotas for Manufactured Goods

In the case of food requirements there are fairly definite physiological boundaries. But this does not apply to consumption of the chief manufactured goods and it is therefore a most intricate task to determine rational quotas for these. It is nevertheless possible to establish approximately the necessary assortments of the most important types of these goods in order to satisfy the needs of the population. Work has been done on this problem, and approximate quotas have been drawn up for the consumption of clothing, underwear and footwear on the basis of the various climatic zones of the country.

The rational quota for fabrics, for example, has been determined as fifty-eight square metres average per head of the population per year. This is a higher level than the actual consumption of fabrics in the U.S.A. and this level of consumption will be very considerably higher than that of the masses of working people in the U.S.A. To reach this quota per head of the population, the production of fabrics has to be increased about two-and-a-half times as compared with the existing level, and the production of footwear to meet the needs (estimated at three-and-a-half pairs per year) has to be more than doubled.

One difficult question is to estimate rational quotas of consumption of goods of various kinds for cultural and household needs. The task set is to enable every family to have a radio, a TV, a refrigerator and a number of other household and cultural goods. In drawing up rational quotas for such articles, calculations have also to be made of the length of service of goods intended for use over a long period and when some goods should be replaced by others of better quality, the changes in the tastes of the population being taken into consideration. In these calculations, the chief trends have to be borne in mind, the progress of science and technique etc.

Of great importance in planning the rise in the living standards of the people are also the needs of housing, communal and everyday services, schools, public health, trade, cultural and educational institutions.

Total Budget of Needs

The drawing up of a rational budget for the Soviet people, in total and in detailed content, has broader aims than the standard budgets of the population which are prepared in capitalist countries. The latter aim to determine the necessary minimum income which would provide the established living conditions; as against this, the main aim of the rational budget for the Soviet working people is to determine the content of a

living standard which will ensure the fullest possible satisfaction of the needs of the man of socialist society. Hence the Soviet rational budget, in extent and in composition, considerably surpasses the standard of living of the working people of the most developed capitalist countries.

Calculations are now being made for an average rational budget with a combined composition covering the following items: food, clothing and footwear; haberdashery and perfumery; goods for cultural needs; furniture and other household goods; and also provision has to be made for items other than goods: housing and communal expenditures; transport and communication; recreation, public health and hygiene; theatres, cinemas and other cultural needs and household services.

The rational budget needs to be based on scientifically determined consumption quotas to as great an extent as possible. In order to take into consideration the provision of goods which are still lacking or are just beginning to be produced, reserves for these purposes are provided for in the calculation of the budget (this is not a question of replacement of some goods by others, but of providing for new devices of various kinds for cultural and household service of the people).

The rational budget has to take into consideration not only consumption of articles provided out of personal incomes, but also those received from the state free of charge, or at greatly reduced prices. For example, the expenditures for food and clothing must include the consumption by children in pre-school institutions and boarding schools, the food of the population in hospitals, etc.

In addition to calculating the total consumption from both individual and public sources, we have to take into account the extension of all forms of public service to the population. At present the data available on catering provided from public funds does not include feeding in sanatoria and rest homes, in hospitals, factory schools and boarding schools. Today the share of public catering in relation to the total food consumption amounts to some 15 per cent.

Long-Term Production Plans

The drawing up of a rational budget for the consumption of goods and services of all kinds is important in determining long-term plans for increasing the production of consumer goods, the development of housing construction, and of branches of culture and public health. The calculated requirements for the planned rise in the living standards of the people have to be co-ordinated with the possible material resources, which depend on the plans of production of industrial and agricultural products.

With the gradual transition to communism the role of public funds in providing for improved well-being of the people is growing. Even during the years of the current Seven-Year Plan (up to 1965) the grants and benefits received by the population from public funds will nearly double. And in the years that follow, provision from public funds will increase even more rapidly, first of all because of the development of the system of communist education of the growing generation on the basis of widening the network of boarding schools and after-school groups, institutions for children of pre-school age, increase in pensions, and more free material and spiritual benefits for the population.

Present estimates do not include benefits received by collective farmers from collective farm funds, which in their economic nature are a form of consumption from public funds. Such benefits cover not only cultural and everyday needs, but also medical treatment, help to the aged, material aid to village schools, etc. The immediate prospect is that such payments will increase many times, and when calculated for the entire country will be of considerable importance in calculating the budget of needs.

One of the new developments which will have to be taken into account is the setting up of centres from which the population can hire for temporary use cars and all kinds of household and cultural goods. In view of the likelihood that this type of service to the population will develop on a considerable scale, the trade of such hiring centres has also to be taken into account.

Considerably more work has to be done in planning various important aspects of public service. For example, in the calculations the development of passenger transport, the extent of transportation facilities required in cities, and the development of communications, have to be examined.

The Use of Labour Resources

For many years there has been no unemployment in the Soviet Union, nor any over-population in the countryside. About 50 per cent of the entire Soviet population are engaged in the national economy, whereas in the U.S.A. only about 40 per cent are thus employed. The proportion of the population engaged in the Soviet national economy will increase, in view of the planned development of the network of children's pre-school institutions, boarding schools, public catering and other forms of public service. This has to be estimated in calculating the use of labour resources and also in the calculations for raising the standards of living of the people.

In the final analysis, under the conditions of socialism the entire national income is used in the interests of the members of society. At the same time it is necessary to determine what part of the national income is to be used directly for the needs of consumption by the people, and what

part for accumulation; though part of the accumulation—housing and communal construction for cultural needs, education and public health—is directly concerned in raising the living standards of the people. At present one-third of all capital investment is for such purposes.

Discussion Contribution

On Paperbacks

John Prime

NO one engaged in progressive bookselling can fail to admire the tremendous work done by the publications of Lawrence & Wishart and the Foreign Languages Publishing House, to which Comrade Eason calls attention (*Marxism Today*, March 1961). But I cannot see what purpose is served by drawing a misleading analogy between these and the mass-produced, mass-distributed paperbacks with which I dealt in my article. I tried to show that, whereas the paper-covered book was nothing new, the post-war paperback distributed in tens and even hundreds of thousands did represent a new trend in publishing which Marxists would do well not to ignore.

Comrade Eason obviously does not see any significant development here and feels satisfied that we have the answers in our existing publications. This judgement seems as complacent as his attitude towards such paperbacks as U-Book's *Essential Left* is grudging. Irrational as it may seem, many readers will buy this book at 7s. 6d., who would never discover the Moscow editions selling at half the price. It is surely sectarian to adopt any attitude other than one of welcome and informed criticism (see the excellent *Daily Worker* review of this publication) when a bourgeois publisher decides to reprint basic writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin in an attractive format which will reach general bookshops throughout the country.

My experience as a bookseller is that many of the books which Comrade Eason lists are still circulating chiefly amongst Communist Party members and

their closest sympathisers. At the same time I have no doubt that the potential market for progressive literature is far greater than this. That is why I asked in my article whether there was anything to be learned from the new methods of paperback production and distribution which might help us get over to this much wider audience the case for the Communist Party; a popular presentation of the Soviet Union; and the arguments for disarmament and against N.A.T.O.

We must ask to what extent our current literature is getting through, for instance, to the tens of thousands of open-minded young people who are being attracted by the C.N.D., the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Young Socialists. The answer is: to a limited extent only. We do not always succeed in presenting our case in the popular forms and terms which they will accept, and which I believe made Willie Gallacher's *The Case for Communism* such a best-selling paperback at a time when the political going was a lot heavier than now.

Comrade Eason says, "Today there are new opportunities to win the battle of ideas in the Labour movement, there is a new ferment of discussion, a new questioning of old ideas: and with that go new responsibilities on all who handle the weapons for the battle of ideas." One of these responsibilities is to keep under constant review whether the forms and presentation of our propaganda match up to those opportunities. My original article merely sought to examine one important factor that should be considered in such a review.

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